SEVERAL

ARGUMENTS

Humbly Propoſed for

Conceſſions and Alterations

IN THE

Common-Prayer,

AND IN THE

RITES and CEREMONIES

OF THE

Church of England,

IN ORDER TO A

COMPREHENSION.

By a Miniſter of the CHURCH of ENGLAND,
As by Law Eſtabliſhed.

The particular Forms of Divine Worſhip, *and the* Rites *and* Ceremonies *appointed to be uſed therein, being things in their own Nature indifferent, and alterable, and ſo acknowledged, it is but reaſonable upon weighty and important Conſiderations, according to the various Exigency of Times and Occaſions, ſuch Changes and Alterations ſhould be made therein, as to thoſe in Authority ſhould from time to time ſeem either neceſſary or expedient.* In the Pref. to the Common Prayer.

Printed in the Year MDCLXXXIX.

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1 May 1845
Gift of R. Rich
London

THE

PREFACE.

GOD *hath wrought very graciouſly, and in an Extraordinary manner, for the deliverance of this Church and State from Popery and Arbitrary Power, in ſuch a way of Peace as other Ages can ſcarce parallel.* But Beneficium poſtulat Officium, *God's great Goodneſs calls for ſome ſuitable return in the way of Love, Thankfulneſs, and Obedience. And no doubt but the Lord expects ſome Work that is Great and Excellent; ſomewhat more than ordinary for the good of that Church, which he hath ſo wonderfully preſerved. And if you would know what we ſhall render unto the Lord for all his Benefits. What more? What better than for Proteſtants with one Heart and one Mouth to glorifie God the Father of all our Mercies, and to Worſhip him with one conſent. And oh that the All-wiſe God would inſpire this Great Council of the Nation with Wiſdom from above, what, and how to act effectually for this Bleſſed Union: Which* (as Mr. De L' Angle *in his Letter to his Lordſhip, the Biſhop of* London) will rejoyce Men and Angels, and bring down a Thouſand Bleſſings of Heaven and Earth upon thoſe that ſhall contribute the moſt unto it, *Unreaſ. of Separ. p.* 424. *It is to be hoped that the Glory of ſo Great and Good a Work will*

be due to our preſent Governours next under God. And ſince we are told in the Preface before the Common Prayer, that in the Reigns of ſeveral Princes of Bleſſed Memory ſince the Reformation, the Church upon juſt and weighty Conſiderations her thereunto moving, hath yielded to make ſuch Alterations in ſome particulars, as in their reſpective times were thought convenient. Therefore I have added Arguments for ſuch Conceſſions and Alterations in this Worſhip, as may be effectual in order to the Deſired Union. Though I have had God's Glory for my end, yet I know no Mans Integrity in the Cauſe of God and of Religion; nor the moſt unfeigned Deſires, and Endeavours for the good and Peace of Church and State, can exempt him from the common fate, that attends things of this Nature, which are ſure to be unacceptable with ſome, if not paſs for an unpardonable Offence againſt the Church of England. *If I knew that there were any thing, but Truth and Charity, I would blot it out. If it be poſſible, and as much as in me lyeth, I would live peaceably with all Men.*

The Motives and Inducements to write were theſe:

Firſt, A Zeal for God. God's Honour is intimately concerned in his Worſhip. What Soul that hath any ſenſe of God and Religion can bear ſo much diſhonour as is done to God in his Worſhip? Several caſting a contempt upon it by their unhandſom Speeches, and ill Examples, prejudiced and prejudicing others againſt it. Many ſcarce look upon it as the Worſhip of God, and mind nothing leſs than to be devout in it. And ſince the Worſhip of God lies under contempt, or a great abuſe and unprofitableneſs in the performance of it, is there not reaſon to be offended at it. I am not ſatisfied, and cannot be ſatisfied without ſome endeavour to redreſs the Evil.

A Second Motive was a deſire to diſcharge this part of my Miniſterial duty to my own, and the Peoples better Edification. Does the World think it is nothing to Miniſters, that have a concern for the Peoples Souls to ſee how little this Worſhip is

done

done to Edifying? How great a guilt lies upon their Congregations upon that very account! Surely guilt enough to lay them low in misery. And the ſenſe of this put me upon another Deſign, (which was firſt in my intention) a ſhort piece Argumentative for Conformity to the Prayers. And therein firſt to ſatisfie Peoples Conſciences in a peaceable Submiſſion and Communion in this Worſhip, though they do not like every thing in it beſt. I urge, that they themſelves will not ſuffer their Children and Servants to leave their Worſhip in their Families, under pretence that anothers is better: But the Governours Authority over the ſeveral Families in the Nation reacheth as far as theirs in their own Family, in all things, Sin only excepted, ſo far as they may be obeyed without diſobeying God. Secondly, To excite them to a Devout uſe of the Prayers, with ſome Helps and Directions for their Edification in it. Thirdly, To keep them within the Bounds of Chriſtian Charity, towards thoſe that differ from us; as knowing that without Charity all is nothing worth. Time and Opportunity called for this firſt, though leſs ſtudied or accurate, and plain in its Language.

Third Motive was a compaſſionate Concern for ſome, who have ſuffered much by the ſeverity of the Laws, and a deſire to prevent their future ſufferings. I know there are thoſe, that diſſent from this Worſhip, that would, very heartily would, if their Conſciences had been ſatisfied, have Conformed to it; If they did not, they knew they were like to pay for it: But by ſuch Conceſſions as to take them in, they will be ſafe for the future from fear of Trouble and Sufferings.

Fourth Motive was a deſire to do my part towards the remedying the Evils which have eventually followed the Act for Uniformity. *And ſurely in an Age, that hath ſmarted ſo much, as this hath done for Contentions about theſe Common-Prayers, it concerns every one to put to his helping hand. I ſhall conclude with a Pathetical and Affectionate Speech of that Reverend Prelate, Dr.* Hall, *who uſed to ſay,* War with none

but

but *Rome* and *Hell, and was a true Son of Peace.* Biſhop Hall's Works, p. 426. " *But thou, O Lord! How long? How* " *long ſhall thy poor Church ſee the Dear Sons of her Womb* " *bleeding about theſe Apples of Strife? (Speaking of ſome things* " *in the* Common Prayers, *Ceremonies eſpecially.) Ye, Men,* " *Brethren, and Fathers help, for Gods ſake put to your hands* " *for the quenching of theſe Common Flames: The one ſide by* " *Humility and Obedience, the other by Compaſſion (i. e. to* " *the weak and unſatisfied) both by Prayers and Tears, that* " *ſo that Paſſage in* His Majeſties Declaration *may take Effect* " *for Eſtabliſhing ſuch Laws, as ſhould make a good Agreement* " *between the* Church of England, *and* Proteſtant Diſſenters. *May that Agreement be in the Worſhip of God. The Great God of Heaven, and every True-hearted* Proteſtant *ſay* Amen *to it.*

Arguments

Arguments for Conceſſions and Alterations in the Common-Prayer, and in the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England, *in order to the deſired Union in Worſhip.*

CErtainly that man is no friend to Church and State, who is an enemy to their Peace and Union in matters of Religion: For, as the Eminent Mr. *Le Moyn* of *Holland* ſaith, in his Letter to his Lordſhip, the preſent Biſhop of *London*, at the end of *Unreaſonableneſs of Separation*. *In* England *the good of Church and State depends abſolutely upon Union of the People in point of Religion, and one cannot there preſs an Union too much*: For there is never like to be an effectual Reformation of Peoples unreformed Lives without an Union, when Conforming and Nonconforming Miniſters may joyn together, encourage, and aſſiſt each other in that bleſſed work. And as to an Union, Mr. *Baxter* in his Life and Death of Sir *Matthew Hale*, ſaith, *p.* 19, 20. that the ſaid Judge told him, the only means to heal us was a new Act of Uniformity. Therefore I ſhall apply my ſelf to the Governours of the Church that are Lawfully called, and have Authority to appoint and alter matters of this nature, reſpecting the Service and Worſhip of God. I ſhall in all Humility recommend to the Governours Conſideration ſome Arguments for Conceſſions and Alterations in the Common Prayer; and then in the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of *England*: And to ſhow that I am not alone, and that it is not a project of my own, which hath no countenance or encouragement from others, I ſhall mention greater Names in favour of the ſame Argument, and urge their concurrence; and that ſhall be my firſt Plea.

First Plea, For some Concessions and Alterations in this Worship, because there are some things which, in the judgment of several eminent Conformists, may be altered without any detriment or dishonour to the Church. Divers Reverend Bishops and Doctors, in a Paper in Print, before the unhappy Wars in King *Charles* I. Reign, yielded to the laying aside of the Cross, and the making many material Alterations; as the Archbishop of *Armagh*, the Bishop of *Lincoln*, Dr. *Prideaux*, Dr. *Ward*, Dr. *Brownrigg*, Dr. *Featly*, met together by Order of the Lords, at the Bishop of *Lincolns* in *Westminster*, (besides some Innovations in Discipline given in) hinted their desire of the *Alteration* of many things in the *Book of Common-Prayer*, as the Reading of the *Psalms* according to the *New Translations*; Lessons of *Canonical Scripture* instead of the *Apocrypha*; leaving out the *Hymn of Benedicite*, and the saying *Gloria Patri* after every *Psalm*; changing *with my Body I thee Worship*, into these, *I give thee Power over my Body*; *I Absolve* thee in the *Visitation* of the *Sick* into these, I pronounce thee *Absolved*, &c. *Grand Debate*, p. 31.

Again, the Bishop of *Armagh*, p. 130, 131. from Dr. *Barnard*, to this effect; That for the healing of those distractions and divisions among Ministers, and others, and the moderating of each extream, in relation to the use of the Liturgy, whereby there might be a return of that wished for Peace and Unity, which of late years we have been strangers to, he conceived some prudent and moderate accommodation might be thought of by wise men, in order to the continuance of the substantial part, each side yielding somewhat after the example of St. *Paul*, *Rom.* 14. *Idem*, *Directions about the Liturgy*; After his Vindication of the Liturgy, yet it cannot be denied but that there are *nævi in pulchro corpore*; and as it were to be wished that these were altered, so it were to be done without much noise.

Εικ. Βασιλ. Upon the *Ordinance against the Common Prayer*, *Sect.* 4. Our publick Liturgy, or Forms of constant Prayers, must be abolished and not amended in what upon free and publick advice might seem to sober men inconvenient for matter or manner, to which I should easily consent. *Idem*, To the Prince of *Wales*; In this Church I charge you to persevere, as coming neerest to Gods Word, with some little amendment, &c.

King *Charles* the Seconds Declaration from *Breda*, 1660. Since we find some exceptions made against several things in the Liturgy, we will appoint an equal number of Divines, of both perswasions, to review the same, and to make such alterations as shall be

be thought moſt neceſſary, and ſome additional Forms; and it ſhall be left to the Miniſter to chuſe one or other. In the mean time we deſire that Miniſters would read thoſe parts, againſt which there lie no exceptions; yet in compaſſion to thoſe that ſcruple it, our will and pleaſure is, that none be puniſhed or troubled for not uſing it, until it be effectually Reformed, as aforeſaid.

The Biſhop of Corks *Proteſtant Peacemaker*, p. 29. What moſt of the Diſſenters would be at, (no Liturgy, no Epiſcopacy,) may not be, cannot be without Schiſm; we are ready to ſacrifice all we can otherwiſe to the publick peace and ſafety. *Idem* p. 33. But notwithſtanding what I have ſaid of the excellency, both of the Common-Prayers, and of Cathedral Performances, I do not conceive the alteration of an Expreſſion, or here and there of a whole Prayer or two by Law, or diſpenſing with ſome Ceremonies; I do not conceive, ſuch relaxation as this would break the Harmony and Beauty of our Worſhip, or diſturb the Union and Peace of our Church. There are ſome Collects, and perhaps Rubricks too, which with all duty and ſubmiſſion, I humbly conceive might be altered for the better. *Page* 118, 119.

Mr. *Hales* in his Tract of *Schiſm*, p. 215. Propounds it as a remedy to prevent Schiſm, to have all Liturgies, and publick Forms of Service ſo framed, as that they admit not of particular and private fancies, but contain only ſuch things in which all Chriſtians do agree: Prayer, Confeſſion, Thanksgiving, Reading of Scriptures in the moſt plain and ſimple manner, were matter enough to furniſh out a ſufficient Liturgy, though nothing either of private Opinion, or of Church Pomp, of Garments, or preſcribed Geſtures, of Imagery, or Muſick, of matter concerning the Dead, of many ſuperfluities which creep into the Church under the names of Order and Decency, did interpoſe it ſelf.

The great Dean of St. *Pauls* in the *Unreaſonableneſs of Separation*, Pref. About the Book of Common-Prayer, it ought to be conſidered, whether for ſatisfaction of the ſcrupulous, ſome more doubtful and obſcure paſſages may not yet be explained, or amended? Whether the *new Tranſlation* of the *Pſalms* were not fitter to be uſed, eſpecially in *Parochial Churches*? Whether portions of *Canonical Scripture* were not better put inſtead of *Apocrypha Leſſons*? Whether the *Rubrick* about the *Salvation of Infants* might not be reſtored to its former place, in the Office of *Confirmation*, and ſo the preſent excepti-

ons againſt it be removed? Whether thoſe Expreſſions which ſuppoſe the ſtrict exercise of Diſcipline in *Burying* the *Dead* were not better left at *Liberty* in our preſent caſe? Such a review made by Wiſe and Peaceable Men, not given to wrath and diſputing, may be ſo far from being a diſhonour to this Church, that it may add to the glory of it.— And whether uſing the Liturgy, and Approbation and Promiſe of the uſe of it, may not be ſufficient inſtead of the late Form of declaring their Aſſent and Conſent, which hath been ſo much ſcrupled by our Brethren?

True ſtate of the Primitive Church, p. 23. Now in Chriſt I humbly beſeech the Governours of the Church, calmly to conſider, were it not better to have ſuch a Form of Service as would ſatisfie moſt. The Fathers of our Church when they Reformed this Nation from Popery, were deſirous to fetch off as many as they could, retaining for this cauſe all the Ceremonies and Forms of Prayer they could, with a good rectified Conſcience. Some other things I could mention in the Book of Common-Prayer (though not ill in themſelves) yet fit to be altered, and would obviouſly appear to every wiſe man, once reſolved to compoſe ſuch a Form as to take in moſt of this Nation; which I humbly conceive Governours ſhould in Conſcience endeavour, becoming all things to all men to gain ſome, though not all, yet happily gain all in proceſs of time.

Principles and Practiſes of Moderate Divines, &c. They would be very glad, if ſome things that moſt offend were taken out of the way, particularly, that there might be no expreſſions in our Forms of Prayer, that contain diſputable and uncertain Doctrines, *p.* 335. *Vid.* Mr. *Wakes* Sermon on *Rom.* 15. 5, 6, 7. *p.* 23. And that no ſuch weight be laid on leſſer things, as that they ſhould be inſiſted on to the endangering thoſe of an higher nature, and hazarding the Churches Proſperity and Peace.

Serious and Compaſſionate Enquiry into the cauſes &c. That it will be no Hypocritical tergiverſation, no wrong either to our Religion, or our Conſciences, if when the caſe ſo requires it, we change any phraſe of Speech, how fit ſoever in our apprehenſion, for one leſs fit, but more acceptable and currant; or any Rite or Ceremony that we have great kindneſs for, for one that is more grateful unto others, and that according to the ſaying of the Lord *Bacon*, we learn of the elder times what is lawful, and of the preſent what is fitteſt.

Mr. De L' Angles *Letter to his Lordſhip, the preſent B. of* London; I am ſure,

ſure, that if there were nothing wanting to cure your Diviſions but the abſtaining from ſome few expreſſions, the omitting ſome Ceremonies, and the changing of the colour of ſome Habits, you would reſolve to do that, and ſomething more difficult than that with great pleaſure.

Conformiſts Plea for the Nonconformiſts, Part 3. Pref. It is clear there muſt be a Liturgy; and very many, even to Dr. *Sherlock*, mention ſome Alterations in the ſeveral parts of it, as deſirable and adviſable: Without any poſitive arrogance in a matter of this nature, I do offer my obſervation. Some that expect much profit by Preaching, do think firſt and ſecond Service too long and tireſome: Others that care leſs for Preaching, are very buſie in the Interlocutory parts of the Service, grow careleſs, and too often prate (and ſtare about and whiſper) in the Leſſons, and ſleep under our Sermons; both are too long for them alſo. All that I will ſuggeſt in the laſt caſe is, Firſt, That the ſecond Service or Communion-Service, may be then only read, when there is a Communion, or when there is no Sermon [upon Holy-days]. Secondly, That only one of the three Creeds be uſed at one time, in the ſame Service. Thirdly, That the ſo often Repetitions of the Lords Prayer in the ſame Service may be limited. All cannot, moſt do not keep Curats: The work of Reading the ordinary firſt and ſecond Service, beſides incidental Offices, as Baptiſm, Churchings, *&c.* make it very expenſive to moſt mens Strength and Spirits, and wearifome to the People; and the conſtant neceſſary work of Preaching and Catechiſing is hardly endured by the young and healthful, but impoſſible to be performed by the infirm and aged. [And therefore in King *Edward* VI. days, ſome Miniſters were diſpenſed with in not Reading the whole, as *Grand Debate* mentions, *p.* 5.] It is true indeed if a mans Conſcience will bear it, a Miniſter may be both ſhort and ſeldom in the Pulpit; but then it is with two great hazards: Firſt, Of loſing his Auditory, or of his Auditories great loſs to their Souls. This humble Propoſal for omitting the ſecond Service, hath a fair Countenance from the Rubricks; Rubrick the laſt, immediately before the Lords Prayer hath a ſuppoſition that the Communion is Celebrated every Lords day, *&c.*

I mean to conclude with an excellent Citation from Biſhop *Taylor*, *Duct. Dubit.* p. 375. In Rituals and Ceremonies, and little circumſtances of Eccleſiaſtical Offices, and Forms of Worſhip, in the punctualities of Rubricks, in the order of Collects, in the number of Prayers, and fulneſs of the Office upon a reaſonable cauſe, or induce-

ment to the omiſſion or alteration; theſe things are ſo little, and fit to be entruſted to the conduct of thoſe ſober, obedient, and grave perſons, who are thought fit to be entruſted with the Cure of Souls: "And things of ſuch little concernment are ſo apt to yield to any "wiſe mans reaſons, and ſudden occaſions, and accidents, and little "and great Cauſes, that theſe were the fitteſt inſtances of this Rule "(*i. e.* of Latitude) if Superiours would not make too much of little "things. All juſt Governments give the largeſt interpretation to "Churches Orders in theſe things, to perſons of a peaceable Mind "and obedient Spirit, that ſuch circumſtances may not paſs into a "ſolemn Religion; and the Zeal of good Men, their Caution and "Curioſity may not be ſpent in that which doth not profit. In many "caſes a Latitude according to Equity may be preſumed; but if it be expreſly denied it may not be uſed: Which is the caſe of our Conformiſts as to thoſe things, wherein a Latitude might be taken according to the Law of Equity, when they carry ſome conſiderable inconvenience along with them, and reaſon for the contrary; yet we being ſtrictly bound up by the Church, it muſt bring a guilt upon the perſons, diſturb their peace of Conſcience, and prove vexatious and troubleſome to them that way, if they often offend in theſe matters. And this I preſume to be the caſe of thoſe, who in their common practice do not come up to the ſtrictneſs of their bounden and promiſed Conformity, though in ſome caſes, when *extra caſum ſcandali & contemptus*, they may do otherwiſe than the expreſs Letter of the Law requires, and be guiltleſs, as our Caſuiſts affirm.

I beg the favour with all Humility, and with Submiſſion to the Will and Wiſdom of our Governours, to offer to their Conſideration; whether it were not deſirable to have a Prayer for particular Graces in the Evening Service, (the Petitioning part being leſs perfect then) and at ſuch times when the Letany is not uſed. We have ſuch a Prayer in the *Whole Duty of Man*, called a Prayer for Grace, comprehenſive of particular Graces. And then no doubt the uſe of it would be more acceptable in Families than it is now, when it runs out ſo much in Interceſſions, and ſo little in Petition.

Again I offer to their Conſideration; whether the Hymns and Offices of Praiſe after the Leſſons, (eſpecially in the Evening Service) are not become leſs edifying in their preſent uſe, where thoſe Spiritual Songs are barely Read, (as in Pariſh Churches) and not Sung; *there being one way of Singing*, or an Harmonious Reading of them

them uſeful and edifying, though another way not ſo much to Edification, becauſe but few underſtand it in the way of an Anthem. There are ſome things of particular reſpect to the Virgin *Mary*, and good Old *Symeon*, not ſo ſuitable to the Congregation. Whither the Wiſdom of our Governours may not ſee reaſon to forbear thoſe Anthems wholly in *Pariſh Churches*, or to leave the uſe of them indifferent, or limit them *pro hic & nunc*, according as times of Joy and Victory require our Praiſe, or other times of Humiliation to forbear them.

One thing more I beg leave to offer; If our Governours ſee reaſon to alter any thing in the Baptiſmal Office, about the ſign of the Croſs, Sureties, or elſewhere; whether it were not deſirable to have ſome ſuch Scriptures inſerted, as *Job* 25. 4. 14. 4. *How can he be clean that is born of a Woman: Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean*; that Parents may ſee their Childrens Condition ſince the fall, defil'd with Sin, polluted and unclean; and ſo their great need of the Grace of Baptiſm, to be waſhed and cleanſed through the Blood of Chriſt from their Natural pollution and defilement by Sin. If this were but clearly expreſſed, and well underſtood, as it would be one of the ſtrongeſt Arguments for Infant Baptiſm from their Childrens need of the Baptiſmal Grace, ſo it would be a good preſervative againſt Anabaptiſm.

And as to the General Thankſgiving, perhaps it were to be deſired, that to the Redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, and the Means of Grace, were added, and for the Spirit of Grace ſanctifying an Holy Catholick Church, and for the Forgiveneſs of Sins which we believe and hope for, and the Reſurrection of the Body unto Eternal Life. Some have thought our Thankſgiving too general, in that there is no mention made in it of Sanctification. If any of theſe things approve itſelf unto our Governours, my Labour is not loſt. Out of this variety I doubt not, but that their Wiſdom knows what to chuſe, as ſhall be moſt for God's Glory, and the Churches Edification.

II. *Arg.* For Conceſſions and Alterations in the *Common Prayer*, becauſe that Worſhip according to the Acts for Uniformity, or the exceeding ſtrictneſs of the Enjoyn'd Conformity to it, hath been occaſionally, or at leaſt eventually Evil.

Firſt, In reſpect of our Unchriſtian Diviſions and Separation. Thoſe that diſlike this Worſhip, (as there have been ſuch from the Diviſions in Queen *Maries* dayes at *Frankford*) and refuſe to joyn in it,

it, whether do they uſually betake themſelves but to ſeparating, and ſetting up another Worſhip? Even thoſe that will joyn with the Miniſter in his own Prayers, and his Sermon, yet ſeparate from the Common Prayers above any other Worſhip. Hence are ſo many Sects and Opinions among us, that our Nation is ſcandalous upon that account among other Proteſtants, who have a common ſaying, *Half* England is not of the Church of *England*: Good God! What would become of Peace and Union, Love and Charity, if the next Age ſhould be as fruitful of Sects and Parties, and differ in their Modes of Worſhip, as much, as the preſent hath done, wherein thy Church hath been ſo miſerably divided? How long, O Lord, the Author of Peace, and Lover of Concord, wil't thou ſuffer ſuch Confuſion in the Churches of the Saints.

2. This Worſhip, with the *Penal Laws* Eccleſiaſtical and Civil, that inforced the Act for *Uniformity*, hath been occaſionally, or at leaſt eventually evil, by bringing hard ſuffering upon the contrary-minded. Many formerly choſe rather to leave their Native Country, and ſhelter themſelves in *New-England*, than endure the Severities then, and Conventions before the High Commiſſion Court. And if I ſhould ſpeak of the Preſentments and Excommunications, the Fining, Impriſoning, and Confinement from Corporations in latter years, it would be no more pleaſing to ſome to hear of them, than it was to others to ſuffer them. Ah how harſh did theſe things ſound in the Ears of Merciful Men, and the Reformed Churches abroad, that Proteſtants ſhould be worrying one another, biting and devouring one another, and doing the Enemies work for him, who ſcornfully rejoyced at it, and uſed to ſay, Give the Hereticks Rope enough, and they would hang themſelves. But Bleſſed be God who hath taken away the occaſion of theſe Evils, and done that effectually by the preſent Parliament which the Preceeding would have done, as we are informed in the Memorial from the *Engliſh* Proteſtants to His Highneſs the Prince of *Orange*, *p.* 28. Four of our Succeeding Parliaments perceived the abuſe of theſe *Penal Laws*, and the miſchief thereby to Conſcious Chriſtians; and declared their intention of relieving them, if the King would have permitted them, yet they endeavoured to ſtop the Execution of them, and deſired a Settlement of Liberty of Conſcience as is due to Chriſtians. Adieu now to theſe Preſentments, Fines, Impriſonments, Excommunications, Troubling the Peace of our Neighbours, and too often it hath been our peaceable Neighbours;

bours; though I am apt to think but few have ſuffered comparatively with the many that eſcaped, yet thoſe that ſuffered, were too many, and to be pitied; ſeveral of them as honeſt, well-meaning Perſons, though miſled through weakneſs of Judgment, and ſcruples of Conſcience.

3. This Worſhip conſidered with the Acts for Uniformity, hath been occaſionally, or at leaſt eventually Evil, in reſpect of the War and Miſeries in King *Charles* the Firſt his dayes, occaſioned much, if not beginning by the Impoſition of the Liturgy on *Scotland*, for an Union of both Nations in Worſhip. That Nation was ſo much incenſed that they drove, or were ready to drive the Miniſters out of their Churches at the reading of it; and broke out into a Rebellion, which infected *England* with their Covenant to down with the Liturgy, and Biſhops.

4. This Worſhip by the exceeding ſtrictneſs of the Acts for Uniformity, Subſcriptions, Aſſent and Conſent, *&c.* hath been an occaſion why ſo many Diſſenting Miniſters of conſiderable Gifts and Graces have been rendred in a great meaſure unſerviceable to the Church by Suſpenſion, or Deprivation.

Some in Queen *Elizabeths* time, when (as the *Reverend Dean of St. Paul's* ſaith in his *Unreaſ. of Separation*,) they could very ill be ſpared, not to ſpeak of thoſe in King *James* the Firſt his Reign, and King *Charles* the Firſt; of later years, as the return of King *Charles* the Second, a great Number of Miniſters, Good and Worthy Men in the main, and for the generality of them, were deprived for their Nonconformity.

5. This Worſhip hath been eventually Evil, by weakning the hands of Diſcipline, while the ſcandalous open evil Livers have eſcaped the Cenſures of the Church, together with the more peaceable, and innocently-minded Separatiſts. Thus *Dr. Cumber on the Communion Service*, Diſcipline with-held (*ſaith he*) in favour of Diſſenters, leſt by impoſing of it there, this Holy Means of Reformation ſhould be deſpiſed, rather than obeyed. And ſhould Men have gone about to ſuppreſs and reform Debauchery and Prophaneneſs by a ſtrict Preſentation of them, the Court, which hath more hotly purſued the Diſſenters, than the Scandalous and Vicious, would like enough have put them upon Preſentment of Diſſenters, without any favour or difference between the weak and the wilful; which becauſe of the ill Conſequence (which too often followed) Excommunication and Impriſonment,

priſonment, many Miniſters and Church-Wardens were more backward and averſe unto. Their Conſciences would not ſuffer them to work ſuch ill and trouble to their Chriſtian Brethren, Fellow Proteſtants, Loving Neighbours, for ſome ſmall difference in leſſer matters not deſtructive of their Salvation. And no doubt but the Wiſdom of our Governours ſaw the Evil and Inconvenience of thoſe ſeverities. When they took away the *Penal Laws* that made the *Common Prayer*, and Act for *Uniformity* ſo terrible to the contrary-minded.

Arg. 3. For Proof that the Common Prayer, according to the Acts for Uniformity, is inconvenient in ſome reſpect, and may admit of Alteration, becauſe of the great diſguſts, and almoſt invincible prejudices of People, (eſpecially in the Country) againſt this Worſhip, or at leaſt ſome things therein. Cars *Peaceable Moderator, or Plain Conſiderations for ſatisfaction to the diſaffected to our Common-Prayers.* In the Preface, many ſtumble much at our Book of *Common Prayers*; and ſome of them, I take to be good Chriſtians, honeſt, moderate, well-meaning People, and have found by experience much of their diſaffection to it doth lye upon their miſtake through Ignorance, not peeviſh wilfulneſs. After all our Preaching and Inſtruction, and Exhortations in behalf of the *Common Prayer*, we do not find that ſucceſs which we uſe to have in other matters, and which we might expect, if their prejudice were not ſo deeply rooted in them, and too mighty for us. The difficulty is great, becauſe the guilt of People is great. Where People have often ſinned any Sin, the harder it is to repent: And how often have may been preſent at theſe Prayers? Yet, I fear, ſcarce ever prayed heartily and acceptably. Again, Sins deſcending from Parents to their Children, are harder to be worked out of them; but prejudices againſt this Worſhip have been tranſmitted down from Parents, and as it were entailed upon ſome Families: So that there is as little hopes of gaining them over, as for bringing Men off from the Religion of their Anceſtours; which commonly proves unſucceſsful.

Again the Commonneſs of this Guilt, were it but two or three in a Congregation that were prejudiced againſt it, there were the more hopes, that by the Examples of others they might be recovered: But when it is a great, (if not the greater) part of the Congregation, that is not heartily reconciled to this Worſhip (as I fear it is in too many Pariſhes.) It is the greater difficulty, when the Diſeaſe is ſo general,

ral, when the Infection hath ſpread it ſelf ſo much, to cure it effectually.

There is too much proof of Peoples prejudices, in that the number is ſo ſmall, ſo few that come to the Prayers upon the Holy Dayes; and yet the Church is ſo exceedingly full at a Funeral Sermon, (or any other preaching time,) when People are not much longer at Church than on ſome Holy Dayes And on the Lord's Day there are few that will come to the Prayers, to be preſent at the whole Service, many hard Speeches againſt them, ſome reviling them, as the Maſs-Book, Popiſh, Superſtitious will Worſhip, Prayers of courſe a cold dead piece of Formality. There are ſo many Objections, Scruples, and Cavils againſt it, as dull and tedious for the length of it; as a Form of others making, and not the Miniſters own; as Book-Prayers ſlighted by the vulgar upon that account, who ſay they can read the *Common Prayer* as well as the Parſon, ; againſt the Reſponſes, though uſed among the *Jews* and *Primitive Chriſtians*; againſt the ſhort Prayers, and Hymns read (and not ſung,) diſuſed both in our other Devotions, more commonly but one continued Prayer without ony intermixture; againſt ſome things cenſured as vain Repetitions; and againſt the Ceremonies uſed in the Worſhip. As to particular exceptions you may find enough, if not more than enough in the Grand Debate between the Conformiſts and Nonconformiſts: How theſe prejudices may be in a great meaſure abated and taken away, I ſhall ſhow as the benefit of Union, That a Comprehenſion of the more ſober and moderate Diſſenters might do it in time.

Evils of this Prejudice.

Firſt, It is the cauſe of the ſcandalous abuſe and profanation of Holy Dayes. If People were unprejudiced, an Hour ſpent in devout Prayer and Praiſes, due Attention unto the Word of God, and ſometime in good inſtruction of Youth, and Explication upon the Church-Catechiſme, or Expoſition of the Epiſtle and Goſpel of the Day, would turn to ſome good account; and the *Evening Service* uſed to, as appointed on Holy Dayes; but prejudice mars and hinders all this from taking effect, and makes our Holy-Dayes uſeleſs in many Pariſhes, a loſs and hindrance rather than advantage to Religion.

Secondly, It hath occaſioned much diſhonour to God on the Lord's Day. Firſt, By a great neglect of this Worſhip, ſeveral abſenting from it, and ſtaying till the Prayers are over before they come, and

loſing the benefit of this Worſhip wholly; which is commonly the bigger half of God's Worſhip on the Forenoons, and the whole Service of God in many Pariſhes in the Afternoon, there being no Sermon, nor Catechiſing, nor at leaſt no Explication of Catechiſme. And is it nothing for ſo many People in many Pariſhes to loſe the benefit of half God's ſolemn Worſhip? No doubt but they are highly guilty before God, and will be found ſo at that day, when Sins which the World counts light of, ſhall appear in their juſt weight of Guilt according to the Word of God. Again Secondly, It occaſions much diſhonour to God on his own day, by reaſon of Peoples great unprofitableneſs in this Duty; many preſent at it, manifeſting ſuch a careleſs Spirit, as if they were not worſhipping God; doing any thing rather than that: Some waiting with great impatience, until the Prayers be at an end, as if there were no good to be gotten by them. How is it to be expected, that it ſhould be done to edifying, until Peoples prejudices be removed? That their Hearts ſhould be right and devout in a Worſhip, which their minds are not reconcil'd unto? They muſt be brought to ſome good liking of it, as a true and ſound Worſhip of God, ſuch as God will own, before they will ſerve God with the Internal Acts of Devotion, be Spiritual and acceptable with him in his Worſhip. And if it be little to you to neglect this Worſhip, or loſe the benefit of it when you do perform it heartleſly, praying as if you pray'd not, and ſo you may expect that God ſhould hear as if he heard not, and give you a cold Anſwer to ſuch cold and faint Requeſts: And it is to be feared, that the lukewarmneſs and indiffe rency of many (not the worſt of Chriſtians) in this Worſhip will hardly conſiſt with their Everlaſting Welfare, much leſs attain the ends of Devotion. Thirdly, Conſider further, That this great abuſe of God's VVorſhip, and unprofitable performance of it, is like to be an hindrance to you, as to God's Bleſſing on the remaining Duties: And will that do no hurt, if the Prayers (as ſome think) will do no good? VVe are forbid to *quench the Spirit* and his Grace: Imagine we Men to be warmed and fervent in Spirit, and in frame for Holy things at their firſt coming to Church, this Heavenly warmth and zeal muſt needs be quenched and cooled by their dull and dead-hearted formality in this VVorſhip.

You know, one Sin *grieves the Holy Spirit*, and makes him withdraw further from us: One Duty careleſly and negligently performed makes him

him the more unwilling to assist in other duties. They that regard not the Word read, God will regard them the less in the Word preached. They that give not God the Honour in his Praises due to his Name, God will regard their Prayers the less: And if your first praying in the publick Prayers be turned into Sin, shall not their latter Service be less acceptable with him, than if every Duty and every Service were performed in a Spiritual manner to Edifying?

Again Thirdly, The Peoples Prejudice and ill Opinion of some things in this Worship does work in them an ill Opinion of the Governours in Church and State, who enjoyn them. They are ready to think, that the Governours have little care and concern for the good of their Souls, little regard to their Edification, who continue those things which in their Judgments are no edifying, and their continuance notwithstanding all the Objections and Exceptions against them.

Again Fourthly, Their prejudice hindereth them from discerning what is good, or useful, and excellent, in the *Common Prayer*, and disposeth them on the contrary to cavil, and find fault with it, in what is inconvenient, to gather the doubtful and obscure passages, and to stretch every thing to the worst sense, even beyond the intention and design of them, when a good liking and approbation of it would dispose them to judge Charitably; and *Charity*, you know, *covers a multitude of lesser faults.*

Cure of these Prejudices. I doubt not, but that (by the Blessing of God) such Concessions and Alterations in the *Common Prayers*, as to take in our Dissenting Brethren (as certainly the more sober and moderate Ministers of the Presbyterian Perswasion would come in upon some Concessions) would weaken much Peoples Scruples and Objections against the Prayers. For we know, *non minus exempla trahunt quam præcepta docent*, the People are lead by the Example of their Teachers, as much, as by their Doctrines: When they shall find the ablest Ministers among the Dissenters to read, and conform to it in their Practice, and in their Preaching to defend and vindicate it, exhort and perswade others to conform thereunto, (as even the Old Nonconformists, not to the Prayers, but to the Ceremonies, and the subscription by *Canon*, used to do) the People (at least in some considerable measure) may come to be convinced of their Errour in the dis-

eſteem of theſe Prayers; Beſides, that their Prejudices, Opinionative Conceits, and Scruples will fall of themſelves, when the things that offend them are taken out of the way. Then People will profit more, when prejudice is abated, and be aſhamed to carry themſelves ſo negligently, and contemptuouſly, as before; and the whole Worſhip of God, the Prayers and Office of the Desk as well as of the Pulpit be done to Edifying, not claſhing one againſt another, nor contending for the Pre-eminence; Holy-Dayes of the Churches appointment by that means will be more improved, as Peoples prejudices againſt the Service ſhall ceaſe or decay; and we may hope to ſee the Lord worſhipped in the Beauty of Holyneſs, and ſomewhat like the Zeal and Devotion, Grace and Spirit which the Primitive Chriſtians manifeſted in their Forms of Prayer: Whereas now we bear only or chiefly a Conformity to them in the External Modes of our Worſhip, while we have loſt the inward Life, and keep the Form of their Godly Prayers without that Power and Spiritual Affection which they had; as *Tertullian* tells us, *Beſieging God with their Prayers*, as it were piercing the Heavens to the Throne of Grace, doing Violence unto it, to take Heaven, or Heavenly and Spiritual Bleſſings by force. We are told too, how forward the Primitive Chriſtians uſed to be, and earneſt to be preſent at the beginning of their Worſhip, with Sighs and Tears in their Eyes, manifeſting their Internal and unfeigned Devotion. And if Peoples prejudices ſhould once be overcome, and they come to any good Appetite to this Spiritual Food, they would be as ſure to come to the beginning of God's VVorſhip, as commonly they do to the beginning of a Feaſt, or at leaſt few that will ſtay until that is over before they come; and few that would loſe the benefit of ſo much of God's VVorſhip, as they do by coming late, and worſhipping God in an outward lifeleſs way, without an inward Conformity; which is the unhappineſs of our times, and is never like to be remedied while Peoples prejudices continue, and the things that they diſguſt, as the length of the Prayers, the often uſe of the Lord's Prayer, the Sign of the Croſs, Reading the Second Service at the Communion Table, or Altar, with bowing towards it, Godfathers, *&c.*

Arg. 3. For Alteration in the Prayers is from the difference of the preſent Caſe, from that at the Reformation.

First,

First, This Worſhip, conſidered with the ſeveral Forms, Orders, &c. was more neceſſary then, when the Miniſters were very ignorant, (many of them) and more fit to read others Sermons, (as they did the Homilies with profit) and to uſe others Prayers, than either to make Sermons or Prayers of their own. They were ſo ignorant, that it was complained, ſome of them could ſcarce Read, and many of them did not underſtand Latin; and then a Form of anothers making, ſound in Doctrine and Worſhip, was profitable, if not neceſſary, leaſt they ſhould have put in Errors or Hereſies into their own Prayers: For they would have made very pitiful ſtuff, ſorry matter of it, if they were to have made any long Prayer of their own, though a Form. But now there is more Light and Knowledge in theſe days, (to give that Argument a juſt weight) inſomuch, that if Miniſters be not very idle and negligent, ſo many good Books of Devotion, and excellent pieces of Divinity, as the Church of Chriſt abounds with, they may be able to make ſuch Prayers, as may be ſound and comprehenſive, ſuitable and edifying: Nay, they may attain to ſome ability to expreſs their deſires to God without an exact Form, if they are ſuch perſons as are much in the practice of this Duty, as it is fit Miniſters ſhould be, after the example of the Apoſtles, *Acts* 6. 4. *But we will give our ſelves continually to Prayer, and the Miniſtry of the Word.*

Secondly, It was more ſeaſonable at the Reformation than another Worſhip; becauſe it receded leaſt from their former Worſhip, leaving that only in what was plainly and undoubtedly evil; and ſo was it more ſafe upon the ſame account. For it is a common Rule in all Changes in Bodies Natural and Political, that the Change be no more then needs muſt, it being dangerous to run from one extream into another: And that Change which they did make in the Worſhip, was not without its danger; for in *Devonſhire* and *Cornwall* there was a Rebellion upon the account of changing their Worſhip: But there would be no danger of Rebellion now upon ſome juſt alterations. It cauſed one indeed in *Scotland* (as before) which infected *England.*

Thirdly, It was more ſatisfactory and acceptable to the generality of the Nation, at the time of the Reformation, than any other. So that we do not read of any that ſeparated from it in *Edward* VI. days

days. And though, when they were at liberty in *Germany*, ſome were for another Worſhip at *Frankford*, yet we do not read, but they Conformed to it in *England*, until near the *Spaniſh Invaſion*, when a party of *Jeſuits* and *Roman Prieſts* were found crying up a ſort of Free Prayer, drawing ſome off from the Common-Prayer, though not men of note. And in the Act, *Primo Elizabetha*, you may find the eſteem they had for this Worſhip: It ſaith, to the great decay of the due Honour of God, and diſcomfort to the Profeſſors of the Truth of Chriſts Religion, the Common-Prayer Book, and the Act for it was repealed and taken away in Queen *Maries* days. But now the generality of Diſſenters, and many that follow the Pariſh Miniſters are diſſatisfied in it; and have little or no liking to it; and whatever is the matter, the genius of the people will not bear it, or ſome things in it; or at leaſt not otherwiſe then as a Burthen and a Grievance.

Arg. IV. For proof that the Common-Prayer, according to the *Acts for Uniformity*, is inconvenient in ſome reſpects; becauſe of the confinement of Miniſters to the uſe of it, not only in the publick, but in their Families, in a manner wholly excluding all other manner of Prayer, even the moſt ſober and diſcreet uſe of the Gift, as Εικον Βασιλ. *Upon the Ordinance againſt the Common-Prayer Book*, Sect. 4. I am not againſt a grave, modeſt, diſcreet, and humble uſe of Miniſters gifts, even in publick, the better to excite their own, and the peoples affections to the preſent occaſions. Again, upon denying him his Chaplains, *Sect.* 16. Which gift as I do not wholly exclude from publick occaſions, ſo I allow it its juſt liberty, and uſe in private and devout retirements.

And the *Act for Uniformity*, in the beginning of King *Edwards* Reign, did give Liberty to uſe any other Prayers and Pſalms, taken out of the Bible, at any due time, not letting or omitting thereby the Service, or any part thereof. More may be ſpoken to enforce this part, that Miniſters ſhould labour after ſome meaſure of the gift and ability to utter their minds to God in Prayer, without keeping ſtrictly to a Form.

Firſt, Ejaculatory Prayer calls for ſome meaſure of this gift, as when we lift up our Hearts to God upon any preſent occaſion in ſome ſhort

ſhort Prayer ; as in time of Temptation, upon ſudden Danger, or news of the Sickneſs or Death of a Friend, or Judgment or Mercy befalling the Nation, or Pariſh in which we live ; or according to the Diſcourſe and Company which we are in, or matter which we read. *Biſhop* Taylor *in his Rules to his Clergy ; That they ſhould teach their People to be much in this Ejaculatory Prayer.*

Secondly, For ſome gift and ability to Pray without a Form is, becauſe that Examination of our Hearts and Lives upon ſet days of Faſting and Humiliation before a Sacrament, and in times of Affliction and Sickneſs, or any Calamity ; the dayly Examination alſo according to many ſober Heathens practice, *Pythagoras* his Advice to his Scholars to that purpoſe ; and which is the practice of good men, and ſerves only to find out our ſins, that we may beg pardon of them, and power againſt them, or be thankful to God for his Grace, keeping us from ſin, or enabling us to do good, and this cannot be done in one ſet Form.

Thirdly, Miniſters Sermons ſhould be begun, continued, and ended with Prayer. Prayer for Direction to a ſuitable Subject, ſuch as the neceſſities of the people call for Method, Matter, Language, that all may be done to edifying : And when it is finiſhed, it is fitting to recommend it unto God, for his Bleſſing upon it. The more Prayer, the more power working with our Sermons. You will find ſuch Sermons take moſt effect, they will be weak without it. And after Preaching, that the Word Preached may be put in practice. Some Miniſters in the Country having a ſhort Prayer after Sermon, reſpecting the principal matter of the Sermon, as the Duties, Graces, Truths of our Chriſtian Religion, or Sins ; as 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. *The Word being profitable for Doctrine*, Reproof, to convince Gainſayers ; for Correction and Amendment of evil Manners, and for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs or Holineſs, by an exerciſe of the Graces, performance of the Duties of our Religion : Now Prayer muſt accompany all the Ordinances of God to ſanctifie, and get Gods Bleſſing on them.

Fourthly, It is fit that all ſhould vary in their Prayers, ſo much as occaſions ſerves, our Sins, our Wants, our Mercies : Neither thoſe of the Nation, nor a particular Congregation, are the ſame always, not

not altogether, though much the ſame. Therefore it is fit our Petitions, Interceſſions, and Thankſgivings ſhould admit of ſome alteration.

Arg. V. For ſome ability to pray without an exact Form is, that in *Phil.* 4. 6. *In every thing by Prayer and Supplication with Thankſgiving let your Requeſts be made known unto God* : In every thing of great concernment and importance in our Lives, be it Worldly or Spiritual matters. Beſides, in the two firſt Centuries this ſort of Prayer prevailed in all probability, and a mixt Worſhip in the third, partly by Form, and part otherwiſe.

'Tis too apparent to be denied, and hath been the obſervation of too many, and their complaint too, that Miniſters take occaſion from the uſe of the Common-Prayers to neglect the ſober uſe of free and conceived Prayer, being inſufficient to pray upon an emergent occaſion, to the ſcandal of their Function, and deriſion of Diſſenters. If one unexpectedly light upon a ſick perſon, and be deſired to pray for him, it is a pitiful excuſe for him to ſay he hath not his Book with him. In caſe of any Calamity befalling a Pariſh; Fire, any Infectious Diſeaſe, or much Sickneſs, *&c.* Or any National Judgment, as upon poor *Ireland*, or Mercy, as the Miracle of Mercy and Deliverance wrought for us of this Nation, it will be expected, or at leaſt it is fit that Miniſters ſhould put in Occaſional Expreſſions for ſuch matters; elſe it will be look'd upon as a weakneſs, and uncomfortable failing in them, not to be able to ſay a Word, or put in an Expreſſion in things of ſuch Importance and Concernment to the Congregation, which remain many times unprovided for by the Common-Prayers.

Firſt, The length of the Common-Prayers allows little room for the exerciſe of the gift in publick, though it be with Sobriety and Moderation. So much of the time paſſeth in the uſe of this Worſhip, that there is little remaining, when the Sermon takes up ſo much beſides.

Secondly, Many in Cathedrals, Viſitations, and often in their Pariſh Churches uſe only the Lords Prayer in the Pulpit, conſidering the length of their Common-Prayers: And indeed a long Prayer in the Pulpit, after the long Prayers of the Deſk, ſeems to me to be highly inconvenient for the Common-Prayer, caſting a diſreſpect upon that; whereas

whereas if the Miniſters own Prayer were placed after the Sermon, to pray for a Bleſſing upon the practical matter of the Sermon among other things, it would much further Miniſters Gift and Ability in Prayer, and promote Gods Bleſſing upon the Word. In Duties preached to pray for Grace to perform them; Graces, that they may be wrought in us; Truths, (ſuch as are without Controverſie) for Grace to know and believe them Spiritually; and Grace to repent of ſins, or keep from them, with a Confeſſion and Thankſgiving for Mercies Spiritual or Temporal.

Thirdly, The *Canon bidding Prayer*, taken in a ſtrict ſence, ſeemeth utterly to forbid and diſallow of all uſe of the gift in publick. Therefore by ſome Conformiſts it is condemned, and held utterly unlawful for them, to uſe any other than an exact Form in generals according to that Canon.

Fourthly, Some look upon themſelves bound to uſe the Common-Prayers, and no others in their Families, according to *that Order*; All Prieſts and Deacons are to ſay daily the Morning and Evening Prayer, either privately or openly, not being let by Sickneſs, or ſome other urgent cauſe. And the Curate, not being reaſonably hindered, ſhould ſay the ſame in the Pariſh-Church: So that if it be not ſaid openly in the Pariſh Church, if Sickneſs or ſome other urgent cauſe do not hinder, it is to be ſaid privately in their Families, or perſonally by a mans ſelf.

Fifthly, Some Conformiſts ſo addicted to this Form in their Families, and in publick, are ſo ſet againſt all other manner of Prayer, as to call it *ex tempore* Effuſion, Confuſion, vain Bablings, Non-ſenſe, running beyond the very heighth of Conformity. Far be it from me to plead for, or to excuſe and countenance the wild extravagancies of ſome fanciful Spirits, who place their Devotion more in their various modes of ſpeaking to God, and expreſſing the matter of their Prayers rather than in the Truth and Piety of the Heart: Yet I think we ought, with Biſhop *Wilkins*, to endeavour after the Gift of Prayer; accordingly to exerciſe it in thoſe caſes above-mentioned: And perhaps ſome more liberty in publick were deſirable, or at leaſt the exerciſe of that liberty, which ſome ſuppoſe given us already; as *Cas Plain Conſiderations for ſatisfaction to the diſaffected to our Book of*

Common-Prayer, p. 8. Our Miniſters have liberty, not only in private, but in publick, both before and after their Sermons, to exerciſe their Gift of Prayer, and to enlarge themſelves upon any emergent occaſion or opportunity afforded, as God ſhall enable them, and they themſelves ſhall judge any way expedient or needful. *Caſes of Conſcience of the Lawfulneſs of joyning with Forms of publick Prayer*, Part 1. p. 28. "The Clergy of the Church of *England* are not re-"ſtrained from exerciſing their own abilities in publick Prayer; in "which is allowed them the liberty the Diſſenting Miniſters can claim "or pretend to, to expreſs in their own words all the matter of "publick Prayer, with all the ſobriety, affection and ſeriouſneſs "they are able. And this permiſſion being of long continuance, and "hitherto uncontrouled by our Church-Governours amounts to an "allowance. *&c.* Such a liberty as this, and ſuch a practice concurrent with it were deſirable: But all are not agreed herein, nor ſatisfied in point of this liberty.

Arg. 6. For Conceſſions and Alterations in the Common Prayer, becauſe of the frequent commands of bearing with the infirmities of the weak, (*i. e.* indulging the weak and ſcrupulous with ſome favour and liberty to forbear thoſe things they ſcruple;) of becoming all things to all men to gain ſome, and pleaſing our Brother for his good to edification; and that all things be done in Charity, *&c.* theſe call for ſome Conceſſions; as my Lord *Hales* in his *Diſcourſe of Religion*, tells us: Some allowance is to be made in the caſe of a weak Brother, who on that account refuſeth, and cannot, though he would, obey. Either all the Commands of bearing with the infirmities of the weak, ſignifie thus much, (ſaith he) or nothing at all. And though the common Anſwer is, Is it not fitter that he ſhould ſubmit to the Church then the Church ſubmit to him? Yet that Anſwer, I preſume, is not ſufficient in this caſe; though there be a Duty that the Child owes to the Father, yet that will not excuſe the Father from the Duty which he owes to his Child, eſpecially when it is from a Conſcientious account that he refuſeth to obey.

Mr. Tulli's *Sermon of Moderation*, p. 22. St. *Paul* made himſelf all things to all men, *&c.* And how was he all things to all, as a Learned Prelate of our own, asks the Queſtion, if he did not ſometime remit of his right to ſome.

Biſhop *Hall.*

Biſhop

Bishop Saunderson *ad Aulam*, Serm. 8. Sect. 38. We deal not like Christians, no, nor like reasonable Creatures, if we expect, all men should come to our bent in every thing, and we our selves relent not our own stiffness in the least matter for their sakes. And even *Dr.* Sherlock *of Religious Assemblies*, p. 22. Speaks of making all reasonable condescensions to the weakness or ignorance of some doubting and scrupulous Consciences; and of giving ease to them, and relaxing the terms of Communion.

1. But the experience of many years shews that our Brethren remain unsatisfied in their Consciences.

2. They offer to give it in upon their Oaths, that they are not satisfied in Conscience, (as some to my knowledge would); and Dr. *More* tells us so on their behalf, I think in his *Mystery of Iniquity, and Answer touching Liberty in Religion*, a place cited by a Nonconformist in our Discourse together.

3. They seem to be in earnest that it is really scruple and dissatisfaction in Conscience, when they would part with their Benefices and People most dear unto them, and suffer Fines and Imprisonments rather then Conform.

4. Again, Their Lives prove the same. Men whose Lives are all of a piece and uniform; such as make Conscience to keep from other sins; why should they not be believed in this wherein they plead Conscience? Can their Integrity be disproved that they are men of no Conscience in other things. But I do verily believe our Nonconforming Brethren, especially the moderate men of the Presbyterian Opinion (not disowning Episcopacy) to be of as unblameable Lives, as any sort of men among us: And these are the men that we plead for to be taken into our Church again.

I shall cite some Conformists in Testimony of their Weakness and not Wilfulness in their Dissent from us, and pleading for favour to the Weak.

Queen *Elizabeth*, as Sir *Francis Walsingham* tells us in his Letter to Monsieur *Critoy* of *France*, made a differeence between the Papists

and Puritans in *Conſcience*, and Papiſts and Puritans of Faction and Sedition.

It was not ſo judged by our Governours in that Age, when the *Act of Uniformity* was firſt Eſtabliſhed ; as if all Separatiſts muſt ſeparate from wilfulneſs and obſtinacy ; but a more Charitable interpretation there was of mens ſcrupling Obedience [in Conformity] ; as is evident by the relief given to ſuch by Queen *Elizabeth*, who with the Advice of her Council put forth a Book of Articles to be Enquired of at their Viſitation, and Preſentation to be made accordingly : And of Fifty Six in number there was not among them One that was judged offenſive on purpoſe, againſt the Rites and Ceremonies then Eſtabliſhed, which ſhewed they were not all *wilful* and *obſtinate* that could not Conform : And ſome Biſhops formed the *Articles of Enquiry* with more moderation. *Nyes Suprem.* p 40.

In the Reaſons given in the Common-Prayer for Kneeling at the Communion. Leaſt the ſame Kneeling ſhould by any perſons out of Ignorance and Infirmity [*i. e.* through Weakneſs] or out of Malice and Obſtinacy, be miſconſtrued and depraved, *&c.*

Biſhop Jewels *Anſwer to Mr.* Hardings *Preface in his Reply.* Some of theſe that now be about you, being I truſt, not frowardly carried away with wilful Malice, but having the fear of God and reverent Zeal to do the beſt ; though perhaps not knowledge ſufficient to judge what is beſt. Was his Charity ſuch towards Papiſts ? No doubt but it was as great to Diſſenting Proteſtants.

Lloyds *State Worthies, in the Life of Sir* William Cecil, *Lord* Burleigh, *in his Letter to Archbiſhop* Whitgift, *for ſome ſcruplous Miniſters :* My Lord, I fear no ſenſual or wilful Recuſant [among thoſe he pleaded for]. I ſharply admoniſhed them, that if they will be diſturbers in their Churches, they muſt be corrected. After follows the Lord *Burleighs* Character : He was not rigid ; he would help the good natured, yet puniſh the ſtubborn ; which ſhews thoſe were not ſuch (at leaſt not in his judgment) for whom he interceded.

King Charles II. *Declaration*, Dec. 26. 1662. His Majeſty being therefore perſwaded that multitudes have ſuffered, being enſnared in their Conſciences, and not from wilfulneſs.

True

True State of the Primitive Church; Truly I think him very defective in Charity, however he abounds in Faith, who thinks all Papists, or Lutherans, or Calvinists malitiously or wilfully blind.

Dr. Barrow *on* Eph 5. 2. *towards the end*; If Christ and his Glory, if the Service and Salvation of his People be our end; if we mind the same common Salvation, as the Apostle calleth it, the differences which after remain amongst us, arise purely from a narrowness and defect of Judgment, and not from any other root of Malignancy, or Hostility.

How such are to be dealt with we are told also, and what favour is to be shown them in respect of that their weakness, King *Charles* the First's Εικων Βασιλ. Upon His Majesties Retirement from *Westminster*, *Sect.* 10. Sure that Man cannot be blamable to God or Man, who seriously endeavours to see the best reason of things, and faithfully follows what he takes for reason; the uprightness of his intentions will excuse the possible failings of his Understanding.

Lord *Faulkland's* Speech to the House of Commons, 1641. If it be feared, that they will employ some of our Laws with a severity beyond their intention, against some of their weaker Brethren, that we may be sure to take away that Power, let us take away those Laws.

Dr. *Puller's* Moderation of the Church of *England*, *p.* 26. Benignity [*i.e.* favour] is to be shewed to the humble and peaceable, but it can in no wise be challenged by the proud and froward. *Item. p.* 24. The Execution of the Ecclesiastical Laws remitted only in consideration of the weakness of the People. *Item p.* 35. According to Equity (which is using as we say a Conscience, *p.* 18.) Our Church desires all her Laws may be interpreted. *Benignius Leges Angliæ sunt interpretandæ, quo voluntas earum conservetur. Capienda est occasio quæ præbet benignius responsum.*

Bishop Saunderson *on* Rom. 14. 3. Sect. 25. We are bound not to despise our Nonconforming Brethren, so far forth, as may probably appear to us, they are weak, and not wilful; and *declares there are some such*, Sect. 29.

Doctor

Doctor Barrow *on* Eph. 5. 2. *towards the end*: As we deal with Children, allowing to the infirmities of their Age, their Ignorance, Frowardneſs, and Untoward Humour, without diſtracting them, ſo ſhould we with our Brethren, who labour under any weakneſs of Mind or Humour.

Doctor Tillotſon's *Second Volume of Sermons*, p. 195. It's great Charity to conſider the inveterate prejudices of Men, eſpecially which are rooted in Education, and which Men are confirmed in by the Reverence they bear to thoſe that have been their Teachers; and great Allowances are to be given Men in this caſe.

Biſhop Tailor's *Rules to his Clergy*: Think no Man conſiderable upon the pretence of a tender Conſcience, unleſs he live a good Life; but if he be an humble Perſon, Modeſt, apt to Learn, and deſirous of Information, if he ſeeks for it in all wayes reaſonable and pious, and is obedient to Laws, then take care of him, uſe him tenderly, perſwade him meekly, reprove him gently, and deal mercifully with him, till *God ſhall reveal that alſo unto him*, in which his unavoidable trouble and temptation lies.

Principles and Practices, &c. p. 333. They (*i. e.* the Moderate Men of the Church of *England*) Believe that thoſe who differ from the Eſtabliſhed way of Religion, ought not to be eſteem'd, or dealt with, as Men of tender Conſciences, [*i. e.* weak ones] who are not quiet, and peaceable, modeſt and charitable in their behaviour towards others, that are not of their way and mind, but muſt needs be confronting of Authority.

Judge Hale's *Diſcourſe of Religion*, p. 21. Some perchance tranſported too far in ſcrupling or oppoſing ſome Ceremonies or Forms, not from frowardneſs, and peeviſhneſs, or a Spirit of oppoſition, but in the ſincerity and ſimplicity of their hearts; thoſe though miſtaken, yet certainly deſerve Compaſſion, Tenderneſs, yea, and Love alſo, much rather than ſeverity and contempt.

Doctor Haſcard, *Dean of* Windſor *on* Eph. 4. 32. To allow no Grace for Common Errours and Frailties; this is ſeverity and unmercifulneſs.

Doctor

Doctor Good's *Firmianus and Dubit.* p. 164. Thoſe to be among them that are of a quiet and peaceable Spirit, agreeing with us in the moſt neceſſary points of Religion: He gives us Reaſons, why Debauchery and Profaneneſs ought to be more ſeverely puniſhed, than Negative Separation, and Simple Nonconformity. [*His Second Reaſon*] The Sins of Prophaneneſs and Debauchery being wilful, (for Drunkards and profane Perſons do not plead Ignorance and Weakneſs,) are of a more malignant Nature than ſins of Ignorance, though ſuch as was not altogether invincible.

Doctor Burnet, *the Biſhop of* Salisbury's *Exhortation to Peace and Union*, p. 34. Let *us alſo conſider one another*, as Brethren, let us bear with one anothers infirmities, let us give ſome allowances to the weakneſs of thoſe that are miſlead by the force of Education, and the byas of Vulgar prejudices.

Serious and Compaſſionate Enquiry, p. 204. He that pleads for Compaſſion upon the account of his weakneſs, muſt firſt willingly ſubmit himſelf to Inſtruction. Secondly, Be uniformly Conſcientious. Thirdly, He will do all that he can, if he cannot do all that is commanded. Fourthly, He may forbear judging and cenſuring them that do all that the Law commands. Fifthly, Will freely part with Money and Worldly Matters to preſerve his own Innocency and Peace. Again, If after all my Endeavours of ſatisfying my ſelf to obey the Humane Law, the thing commanded ſeem unlawful; I ſay this caſe is pityable. Diſobedience then will be only a Sin of Infirmity, which is pityable among Men upon conſideration of common Humanity, and is pardonable with God, as other Errors are on a general Repentance.

Mr. Dodwel's *Letters about Holy Orders*; When you have reduced them [i. e. *the Miniſters, the Perſons in his Pariſh*] to this Excellent Temper (as *p.* 19.) to practiſe the common Duties of Chriſtianity, if you could not perſwade them to aſſent to what you ſay through the weakneſs of their underſtandings, or your unskilfulneſs to plead for a good Cauſe, (*i. e.* Conformity) with Advantage, you muſt needs conclude them invincibly Ignorant, and therefore Excuſable before God in this regard, as well as poſitively acceptable in others; and therefore muſt be as Charitable in your Judgment, as you believe God will prove favourable in his Final Sentence. *Mr.*

Mr. Smithies *Spirit of Meekneſs*, p. 68. As the *Galathians* were *overtaken in a fault*, Gal. 6. 1. So we muſt account them likewiſe, who have diſſented from us. When Men are guilty of Errors of Practice, they are wilful and obſtinate, for they know they are wrong, *&c.* But no Man runs wilfully into an Error of Judgment, but it's through the weakneſs of Judgment, and inſtability of mind, for which he is to be pitied; *Idem p.* 70. I mention theſe inſtances, becauſe ſome Men will not be perſwaded, that there is any thing but wilfulneſs, and obſtinacy, that is the cauſe of Mens Diſſenting, and therefore they ought not to be treated with the *Spirit of Meekneſs*, p. 71. If we conſider what Education many have had, we may well conclude that they were overtaken in the fault of Separation, not that it was a wilful choice.

Mr. Kettlewel's *Meaſure of Chriſtian Obedience*, Edit. 2. p. 494. Some prejudices get into Mens Minds, not through any thing of an evil and diſobedient Heart, but only through weakneſs of the Underſtanding; they are not of an underſtanding ſufficient to examine things exactly, when they embrace their prejudice; for their reaſon is dim and ſhort ſighted, weak and unexperienced, unable throughly to ſearch into the Nature of things, and to judge of the various weight, and juſt force of Reaſons, to ſift and ranſack, ſeparate and diſtinguiſh between Solidity and Shew, Truth and Falſhood: *p.* 496 *Idem p.* 117. Love to others produces in us, if they have honeſt Hearts, but yet are weak in Judgment and Knowledge, a Compaſſionate ſence of their weakneſs, and endeavours to relieve them.

Argument for Tol and Indulg. in difference not of Faith, but of Opinions, Print. 81. It pleaſing God in Infinite Goodneſs to reſpect the Will, the Intention, the ſincere Endeavour of his Servants, and for the reſt to put upon Humane Weakneſs and Infirmity, that Weakneſs and Infirmity, which he will pardon; and if God himſelf have ſo much Tenderneſs and Compaſſion for Humane Weakneſs and Imperfection, ſhall Men themſelves have none for one another? *p.* 5. *Item* 13. And certainly it would much import to healing our breaches, and to lay the Heats and Animoſities that Reign among us, if we more regarded the Conſcience, they who do diſſent from us, do make, and the good Deſigns and Ends they aim at, than the very Opinions and Practices themſelves, in which they diſſent: For in the former

former all good Christians agree, and in the latter will ever differ. We ought highly to honour Tenderness of Conscience, and Intentions directed to the Glory of God, and the Common Good of the Church, and of the World, wherever we find them.

Mr. Hoffman's *Consider. of present use, on* Rom. 15. 6, 7. *That the strong ought to bear with the weak,* &c. p. 18. By the weak, I mean those which are really so, and not such as use it for an obstinate and ungovernable pretence: When we hear a Man sincerely from the bottom of his Heart, saying, That he cannot think that indifferent which others do; that he cannot admit things that are really lawful in others Opinions, to appear so in his. A Man that is strong ought to pity such a ones weakness, *Item. p.* 21. They seem to be in earnest, when their blindness will inable them to part with that which is dear to them, rather than obey.

Mr. Allen, *late of* Henfield *in* Sussex, *Pref. to his Sermon,* We desire the trouble of none that are peaceable.

Thus you have seen how the Conformists plead for favour to them in the general; and sure it might be as useful and beneficial to the Church in this particular (Condescention to their weakness) as any other.

Besides all this, I could show out of the Works of Eminent Conformists, that it is acknowledged by them, that there are Good and Worthy Men among the Dissenters from the Church of *England.* And why should not some consideration be had of them, and somewhat to be done for their sakes, who are prized by Conformists as Men of Worth and Goodness. And surely, it will be no loss to our Church to lose a few things that may be spared well enough, if She shall gain her Brethren by that means; especially when the loss is of such things as have need of an Alteration or Abrogation for the common good of Protestants. And I hope, saith Mr. *Claud* to the Bishop of *London,* you will not be wanting in the Duties of Charity, and the Spirit of Peace; and that when the Dispute shall be only of some Temperaments, or of some Ceremonies that are a stumbling-block, and which in themselves are nothing in comparison with an intire re-union, you will make it seen, that you love the Spouse

of your Maſter more than your ſelves. This indeed would manifeſt in the Fathers of the Church a true Fatherly Affection, great Humility and Condeſcention, if they ſhall at length yield ſomewhat to the Infirmity and Importunity of Proteſtant Brethren. And it is highly probable, that ſuch Conceſſions and Alterations, as to take in our Diſſenting Brethren, would take away moſt of thoſe Evils that have troubled the Church. It were the beſt way and means to put a ſtop to the Courſe of Separation. For when the moſt eminent and conſiderable Men of the Nonconformiſts were taken in (as certainly they would come in) the reſt would be diſcouraged and diſcountenanced in their Separation, and we might hope that they would fall off by degrees, and in time be wholly recovered to the Church again. Hereby a great many Miniſters conſiderable for Gifts and Grace, might do ſervice in the Church, who muſt otherwiſe be ſilent, or exerciſe their Miniſtry in a way of Separation. As the Separation will ceaſe much by a Comprehenſion, ſo will the Envy, Hatred, Malice, and Uncharitableneſs that accompanies a divided Church-ſtate ceaſe in the ſame meaſure. And it is to be hoped this would ſtrengthen the hands of Diſcipline, and turn the Cenſures of the Church and their force againſt the ſcandalous open Evil-livers, inſtead of vexing of Diſſenters. And perhaps in order to this Accommodation, it might be deſirable to conſider of the Nonconformiſts Motion, *page* 61. We confeſs that ſome Forms have their laudible uſe to cure that Errour and Vice, that lieth on the other extream: And might we but ſomtimes have the liberty to interpoſe ſuch words, as are needful to call home, and quicken Attention and Affection, we ſhould think that a convenient Conjunction of both might be a well-tempered means to the Common Conſtitutions of moſt. By a mixt Worſhip, partly by a Form, and in ſome part (be it but little) otherwiſe, not as of neceſſity for all, but allowance to ſome who may be habitually apt for it, as Miniſters will increaſe their Gifts, attaining more Holy Skill, and Wiſdom, and Ability in Prayer by this means, and be more fitted and ready for Ejaculatory Prayer, and other ſort of Occaſional Prayer after the Examination of their Hearts and Lives, whether dayly, or upon ſet times of Faſting and Humiliation; or to follow the Word (read or Preached) with Prayer for a Bleſſing on that, and the Sacraments, which with all the Ordinances of God are Sanctified, or Bleſſed by Prayer. Miniſters beſides by this means being more frequent in the performance of this ſo great

and

and neceſſary a Duty, will be more ready and inclinable to it at all times, with much eaſe and freedom, ſweetneſs and delight, which Naturally, much more Spiritually proceed from Uſe and Cuſtom. And the People will be encouraged by the Examples of their Miniſters to do the like, and follow them. And this would mightily promote Religion, all our Religion being like to riſe or fall, as we riſe or fall in this Duty.

7. To continue our *Common Prayer* in all and every thing the ſame, it is to be feared will continue, if not perpetuate Schiſm. While the things ſcrupled and excepted againſt continue, we have little or no hopes of gaining our Brethren. They are never like to be ſo well ſatisfied in Conſcience as to the Aſſent and Conſent to all and every thing, and the undoubted certainty of Baptized Infants Salvation (which Biſhop *Uſher* in his Body of Divinity, of Baptiſm doubted of, and ſo do ſome Conformiſts now, Curates, and others, who can uſe the Baptiſmal Office) and as to the Sign of the Croſs, *&c.* as to come up to a full Conformity to the preſent eſtabliſhed Worſhip. There are but four means of curing Schiſme, either by Inſtruction or Toleration, Reprehenſion, or Comprehenſion. They have had Inſtruction long enough; one Conformiſt after another writing for Conformity, ſome in the Spirit of Meekneſs, ſome with another manner of Spirit; and ſtill they have been anſwered, and the Nonconformiſts remained unconvinced, unſatisfied. And as to Toleration of their different Aſſemblies, there were no cure of Schiſm that way; though I think, it is of the better ſort, like Mr. *Greenham's* Anſwer to the Biſhop of *Ely*, who told him there was a Schiſm in the Church, and asked him where the fault lay? 'On either ſide ſaid he, if they 'violated the Laws of Love, on neither part (as to culpable Schiſm) 'if they lived lovingly together, as they ſhould do notwithſtanding 'the difference of their Judgments.

Further, *Miſchief of Separation*, page 18. 'Men may pleaſe 'themſelves in talking of preſerving Love and Peace under 'ſeparate Congregations; but our own ſad Experience ſhows the 'contrary. For as nothing tends more to unite Mens hearts, than 'joyning together in the ſame Prayers and Sacraments; ſo nothing 'doth more alienate Mens Affections, than withdrawing from each 'other into ſeparate Communions. Therefore as large a Compre-'henſion as may be is deſirable; and no more Toleration of other

Worſhip than neceſſity requires, becauſe Toleration without a Comprehenſion will weaken any Eſtabliſhed Church. As to Reprehenſion (ſeverity I mean by that word) it may make Men Hypocrites, and drive many to Church, who will fall off again, as ſoon as the ſeverities ceaſe. Men are reaſonable Creatures, and what they do, it ſhould be a reaſonable ſervice, from an enlightened mind, and well-ſatisfied Conſcience, not by force and violence done to their Conſciences, diſſembling with God and the World. For neither is God ſerved by ſuch, nor their Souls edified, nor the Communion of Saints encreaſed by ſuch an Hypocritical Union and Communion with our Church. And though it is not to be denied, but that ſome may, by ſuch ſeverities, be put upon a more Impartial ſearch and enquiry into the Tearmes of Communion with us, and ſo be ſatisfied really, yet theſe are but few, the far greater part forſaking us, when once the laſh is taken away, and they come to have their liberty. The laſt and the beſt means is Comprehenſion; and that muſt be by yielding ſomewhat for Peace ſake on either ſide. And ſurely, there is no ſuch wide breach, but that there might be a cloſing, an healing, if we would ſet our ſelves in good earneſt to it, and would not be too ſtiff and ſelf-willed. And to this end perhaps it were deſirable, that, as the *Dutch* did us the Honour of having ſome of our Divines at their Synod for compoſing differences among them; ſo that we might take in the Aſſiſtance of ſome of their Divines, either by their Perſonal Preſence, or Advice by Letter, as Mr. *Le Moyne*, and the *others of France*, Mr. *De L' Angle*, and Mr. *Claud*, worthy Perſons, made ſome Eſſay towards an Union in their Letters to his Lordſhip the *Biſhop of London*. This would add a greater Authority unto what ſhould be ſo eſtabliſhed. And the more Proteſtant Churches that aſſiſted therein, the better and more forcible bond of Union.

But it will be objected (or hath been) nothing will ſatisfie; The Diſſenters will never come in.

I Anſwer, At King *Charles* the *Seconds* Return, though they did deſire many Alterations in the Worſhip, as to Words and Sentences, Ceremonies, *&c.* Yet they drew up the principal matters in a ſhort Letter to the moſt Reverend Arch-Biſhop and Biſhops, *&c.* mention'd p. 30, 31, 32. of the *Grand Debate*.

2. It

2. It may justly be supposed, that among those Objections and Exceptions against several things therein, (when his Majesties Commission gave them that liberty to make such Reasonable and necessary Alterations, Corrections, and Amendments, as should be agreed upon at that Conference, to be needful and expedient,) there were some things, which were judged by them to be inconvenient, other things to be unlawful. If they had been put to it to declare, what they held to be sinful and unlawful to be submitted to, I doubt not but they would have cut off many things, as only inconvenient, and not necessarily or unavoidably evil, and so have been satisfied as to the matter of Conformity with less.

Another Answer. Judge *Hales* with the Lord Keeper *Bridgeman*, and Bishop *Wilkins* drew up a Model of Abatements and Condescentions for a Comprehension of the more moderate Dissenters, and a limited Indulgence towards such as could not be brought within the Comprehension; and when after several Conferences with two of the Eminentest Presbyterian Divines, heads were agreed on, and some abatements to be made, and some explanations were to be accepted of, they put them into the form of a Bill to be Presented to the next Session of Parliament. *In the Life of Sir* Matthew Hale *by Dr.* Burnet *Bishop of* Salisbury, *p.* 41, 42. He gives us the Reasons that prevailed at that time against it, *p.* 70, 71, 72, 73. The Councils and Reasons against it being more acceptable to some concealed Papists then in power, as has since appeared too evidently, the whole project for Comprehension was let fall, and those who had set it a foot, came to be looked on with an evil eye, as secret favourers of Dissenters, underminers of the Church, and every thing else that jealousie and distaste could cast on them.

A fourth Answer shall be given you out of the *Conformists Plea for the Nonconformists*, Part 4. p. 26, 27. In Answer to that Objection, should we yield to any one of these we are far from gaining the rest.

1. Gain any of them, and we shall be the more and stronger by that addition.

2. Except the Presbyterians, the most of the other Dissenters agree in their Modes of Government: So that what you grant to one Party, is granted to more.

3. Is

3. Is it Reaſon and Charity, that thoſe who would unite ſhall not, becauſe all will not upon ſome abatements.

4. Gain ſome, and they will help to draw in others.

5. The more are United, the fewer remain to be Tolerated; by which Toleration I mean no more, but a forbearing one another in Love, with the uſe of Goſpel means to convince and gain them, if poſſible, and by the Civil Sword to reſtrain and ſuppreſs them, when it ſhall be neceſſary, and dangerous to the State, and not before. Thus that Excellent Perſon has given a moſt ſolid Anſwer, with a moſt Chriſtian Spirit: I ſhall add what I had from one of his Majeſties Chaplains by way of Anſwer to the ſame Objection; If there be but room or way made for them the fault will be their own if they will not come in. If the Mother will receive her Children, and entertain them as her own in love, they muſt bear the blame if they will not return home. I might add that they will ſhew themſelves unworthy of that favour given them in the *Act of Toleration*, if they grow more obſtinate and averſe, and utter enemies to an accommodation, and may provoke Authority to take it away.

Another Objection, *Why ſhould there be any Conceſſions or Alterations, when the preſent terms of Conformity are Lawful?*

I Anſwer, They may be unlawful to them, (for to him that eſteemeth any thing to be unlawful, to him it is unlawful; according to that, *Rom.* 14. 14.) but not *ex natura rerum, per ſe*, and ſo they may be Lawful to us, and our Conſciences; or may be Lawful to one and not another, in point of Practice and Conformity; ſo that yielding to their Conſciences and their Scruples may conſiſt with the uprightneſs and integrity of our own, and a Conformity upon juſt grounds of conviction and ſatisfaction.

A ſecond Anſwer: The yielding to the Diſſenters may be ſuch, as not utterly to take away any thing, but to leave ſome things at liberty, as the Ceremonies; eſpecially the Sign of the Croſs. And as the great Dean of St. *Pauls* motioned, whether thoſe expreſſions, which ſuppoſe the ſtrict exerciſe of Diſcipline in *Burying the Dead*, were not better left at liberty in our preſent caſe; [there being a confeſſed want

want and neglect of Diſcipline] : And whether requiring only an uſe of the Liturgy, and approbation of that uſe, and ſubſcription to it, leaving the ſubſcription according to the Canon, and the Aſſent and Conſent, to all and every thing contained and preſcribed, according as perſons Conſciences are ſatisfied or unſatisfied therein : It is certain that the Uniformity in Worſhip, and the end of that *Act for Uniformity* is anſwered by an uſe of the Prayers, as by Law Eſtabliſhed. No doubt but many would Conform upon ſuch a Liberty granted, who cannot ſatisfie their Conſciences in the preſent terms of Conformity : But the leaving things thus at Liberty, were no Argument that they are Unlawful.

Further; Such yielding as this would make no ſuch Alteration but that our preſent Common-Prayer Books would ſerve ; which they might do, if ſeveral Repetitions were left out, as of the Lords Prayer, which we uſed ſo often at firſt, (and continued ſince becauſe received at firſt,) that the people might learn it in their *Engliſh* Tongue ; even thoſe many that could not read, and uſed before to ſay it in Latin, *Pater noſter*, &c.

Other Repetitions, as of the *Gloria Patri* after every Pſalm, (yielded to be left out by thoſe who met at the Biſhop of *Lincolns* Houſe, in King *Charles* I. time) and the one of the Creeds, uſing the *Nicene* Creed upon ſome certain days only : Which were the better way of leſſening the length of the Prayers, by taking away ſome Repetitions, which our Diſſenting Brethren do not pretend to be unlawful, but only to be inconvenient, as ſome Conformiſts acknowledge alſo.

Third Anſwer : Further, *The Preface to the Common-Prayer* acknowledgeth, " that the particular Forms of Worſhip, and the Ce-
" remonies appointed to be uſed, being things in their own nature
" indifferent and alterable ; it is but reaſonable, ſuch changes and
" alterations ſhould be made therein, *&c.*

It ſaith further, " That in the Reigns of ſeveral Princes of Bleſſed
" Memory ſince the Reformation, the Church upon juſt and weigh-
" ty Conſiderations hath yielded to make ſuch Alterations, as in
" their reſpective times were thought convenient. But when the

Church

Church did yield in those matters, she did not yield them up as utterly unlawful, but inconvenient, or less suitable to those times; *& pro conditione temporum*, some things are more, some less convenient, and fit for continuance or alteration accordingly.

Fourth Answer: The present terms of Conformity will be the same as to their Lawfulness or Unlawfulness, whether there be any condescensions for Dissenters, or none at all. As I am a Conformist both in judgment and practice, so I could offer Arguments in defence of my present Conformity, as well as for Concessions to the Nonconformists. Yet the Learned Bishop *Cosins* declared in his last Testament, that it was the great duty of us all to Unite, and I am sure it is so, and that it is no duty of any at all, to censure or condemn the present terms of Conformity as Unlawful, upon the account of any concessions or recessions from them, for so good an end as an happy Re-union and Comprehension. I need not remind you in how many Precepts this Duty is enjoyned, how tenderly and compassionately the Apostles of our Lord dealt with weak ones, how earnestly they charged us to receive them, to bear with them, to become all things to them to gain the weak, to please them to their edification, *&c.* Arguments enough to convince us that it is our duty, whatever the World say, or think of us, to yield somewhat to the weakness of our Brethren, and to relax, as the Author of the *Serious and Compassionate Enquiry* has it, *p.* 102. Making the terms of Communion more free and easie; this is highly recommended by some good men, as the most proper expedient for a Protestant Church in our condition.

Another Objection. *It would be a dishonour (say some) to our first Reformers, to take away those things which they Established.*

To which I Answer; as *True state of the Primitive Church.* The Fathers of this Church, when they Reformed this Nation from Popery, were desirous to fetch off as many as they could, retaining for this cause all the Ceremonies, *&c.* Certainly we cannot do our Fore-Fathers a greater *honour*, than to observe their Rule of Reason, to conform to the times; and therefore they are grosly mistaken, who think it a dishonour to them, for us to take away what they have Established, when we keep close to the reason wherefore they did Establish it.

Iren.

Iren. p. 225. This Temper was uſed by our Reformers, in compoſing our Liturgy in reference to the Papiſts, to whom they had then an eſpecial eye, as being the only party then appearing whom they deſired to draw into their Communion, by coming as near them, as they well and ſafely could ; I ſay the ſame reaſon which at that time made them yield ſo far to them, would now have perſwaded them to alter and lay aſide thoſe things which yield matter of offence to any of the ſame perſwaſion with themſelves. For ſurely none will be ſo uncharitable towards thoſe of his own Profeſſion, as to think there is not as much reaſon to yield in compliance with them as with the Papiſts. Further, Lloyds *State Worthies* in *Quarto*, p. 998. in the Life of Archbiſhop *Laud*, he brings in that Biſhop, diſliking Mr. *Calvins* words of Cenſure, *Tolerabiles ineptias*, who knew not ſaid the Biſhop the temper of the Nation, requiring then not what was abſolutely beſt, but moſt conveniently good. And thus our Reformers did what was beſt in their days, or moſt conveniently good : Even as *Ariſtotles* Organon might be beſt in the days of old, but now the caſe is altered, and the reading Lectures out of that Book is commonly with leſs profit, than other Logicks would be ; the caſe may be applicable to ſome things at leaſt in the Common-Prayers, if not the Worſhip it ſelf, as not done ſo much to edifying, *&c.* And the Reformers reaſon for their Impoſition ceaſeth, which was the enlargement of the Church, by gaining and winning as many as could be, to our Communion : The Papiſts came to this Worſhip till the 10th or 12th year of Queen *Elizabeths* Reign : But now it hinders and ſhuts ſome of our Reformed Proteſtant Brethren out of our Church ; and ſo the reaſon which made at firſt for the impoſition, maketh as much now for the abrogation of ſome things therein.

I ſay again, not a diſhonour to our firſt Reformers ; becauſe a due acknowledgment may be made of their worth, and the work of Reformation in their days, that it was the beſt, the fitteſt, or at leaſt praiſe-worthy. Our Forefathers, who knew what Popery and a Maſs book was by ſad Experience, rejoyced, that they had Prayers found for the ſubſtance, and purged from the Corruptions of the Maſs book, and looked upon it as a wonderful Bleſſing from Heaven, and were thankful. And if ſomewhat be inconvenient, and leſs ſuitable to the genius of the people in theſe days, not ſinful and unlawful, or unmeet for good Chriſtians to joyn in ; I preſume no diſhonour will

be done to our firſt Reformers; who, as ſeveral are apt to imagine, if they had lived in theſe days, would have taken at leaſt ſome few things away for the enlargement of our Communion.

Thirdly, Gods Honour is greater than that of our firſt Reformers; but God is highly diſhonoured by this Worſhip, as it is at preſent performed, careleſly, negligently, under contempt by many, and by moſt, I am afraid, little regarded, as to the devout uſe of it. And the Queſtion muſt end in this; whether God will be more Honoured by the continuance of the Common Prayers, as at preſent; or whether (with Submiſſion to the Wiſdom of our Governours) it may not admit of an alteration in ſome things for the better? Whether it is like to do moſt good to Souls, and beſt attain the ends of Worſhip, in its preſent uſe, or any Amendments or Conceſſions for a Comprehenſion: So be it, Gods Worſhip be done to edifying by the greater part of our Congregations, in the City and Country both, God will have the Glory, and all good Chriſtians will be ſatisfied.

Another Objection. *What need of a Comprehenſion? Are we not as well without it? What ſhall we be the better for it?*

To which I Anſwer; There are no doubt a Thouſand Bleſſings of Heaven and Earth accompanying that Church ſtate, which like the Heavenly Society is at Unity in it ſelf. If there were any Community here upon Earth that enjoyed a perfection of Love and Peace, how ambitious would Mortals be to enter into that Peaceful Society. But the neareſt approach that we can make unto it is by a *Philadelphian* ſtate. An Heavenly thing is Unity, as *Nazianzen* well obſerved, *Pugnas & diſſidia neſcire Deum & Angelos*; No broyls, no jars in Heaven, nothing but Peace there, and it is a kind of Heaven upon Earth, when Brethren dwell together in Unity, *Pſal.* 133. 1. *Behold how good and pleaſant a thing it is*, &c. Pleaſant to behold, a lovely ſight to ſee an Army marching in an exact order; and as amiable and acceptable to hear people of the ſame Pariſh, Town, City, and Kingdom pouring out their joint requeſts, with one Mouth, and one Heart praying for the Peace and Proſperity of *Zion*. O the Benefits of Union are unſpeakably great! I profeſs my ſelf to ſtand admiring the vanity of this contentious World that values ſuch a ſtate

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no more. Hear what men of the moſt ſerene temper, men that aſpired after it, if it were poſſible to attain to ſome good degree of it, or ſomewhat like it, by living peaceably with all men, and by being Peacemakers.

Benefits of Peace and Unity.

Lord Bacons *Eſſays*, p. 13. *Speaking of Peace in the Church*: It containeth infinite Bleſſings, it eſtabliſheth Faith, it kindleth Charity, and it turneth the Labours of Writing and Reading of Controverſies, into Treatiſes of Mortification and Devotion.

Biſhop Andrews *Sermons*, p. 672. The Spirit dwells not but where Unity and Love is. —— Think of this ſeriouſly, and ſet it down, that *at* Salem *is his Tabernacle*; and *Salem* is Peace; and ſo the Fathers read it, *in pace factus eſt locus ejus*, make that place for him, and he will ſay, here is my Reſt, here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein.

Mr. Vertues *Plea for Peace.* Chriſt hath ſaid, *Bleſſed are the Peacemakers, they ſhall be called the Children of God.* Matth. 5. 9. As we would ſhare in this Bleſſedneſs, let it be our ſtudy. *Item*, p. 51. Would we ſee good, and enjoy long days, would we be ſure that we have that Wiſdom which is from above, be peaceable, wrangle not for trifles, contend not about uncertainties.

Dr. Goods *Firmianus & Dubitantius*, p. 165. It is not to be doubted, but that Peace and Unity, and Love among our ſelves, would much diſhearten thoſe reſtleſs enemies of our Church and State, *&c.* and cauſe Religion and Primitive Chriſtianity to flouriſh in our miſerable divided Nation; while that time, which is now ſpent in vain Wranglings and unchriſtian Contentions, would be better employed

in devout Prayer, Holy Meditation, and Mortification of our Corruptions, in Duties of Piety towards Almighty God, and of Love, Mercy and Charity one towards another.

Mr. Jekyls *Sermons on* Jer. 5. 29. *p.* 30. Next to Peace with God, without which all other ſecurity will prove deceitful, Unity amongſt our ſelves is certainly the moſt effectual thing to the making of us an happy people; and till that be attained, we may poſſibly be quiet, but we ſhall never be ſafe.

I ſhall conclude this with an excellent Speech of that Pious and Peaceable Prelate, Dr. *Reynolds*, in his Sermon of *Self-denyal*, towards the end; It were worth not only our Faſting and Prayer; but our Studying, our Sweating, our Bleeding, our Dying, to recover Peace to the Church, and Unity amongſt Brethren again.

I could argue alſo from the miſchievous effects and conſequences of our Diviſions, that the caſe of our Church muſt be very ſad and deplorable while our Diviſions and Confuſions in matters of Religion continue. *Malorum ilias*, a multitude of evils throng in upon a Church through its unchriſtian Diviſions. A divided ſtate is an unhappy ſtate; it is a ſtate of Separation from God as well as from their Brethren.

Biſhop Andrews *Sermons*, p. 672. And what is there would ſooner grieve him, (the Holy Spirit) and make him to quit us, than diſcord or diſunion? Among divided men or minds he will not dwell; not but where Unity and Love is. They may talk of the Spirit without theſe in vain. To ſay Truth, who would be hired to dwell in *Meſheck*, *Pſal.* 120. 5. where nothing is but continual jars and jangles? Such places, ſuch men are even as *Torida Zona*, not habitable by the Spirit, by this Spirit: But for the Spirit of Diviſion, *ut habitet inter eos Dæmon*, a fit place for the Devil to dwell among ſuch. And ſurely he that hath an heart affected with any ſenſe of the miſerable caſe of our divided Church (though bleſſed be God not in ſo lamentable a caſe now as in former years) he that hath any concern for it muſt needs be convinced that we are not well, cannot be well in our multiplicity of Diviſions.

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The Lord Chancellor Hides *Speech to the Parliament*, 1660, He calls it a ſad Conſideration, that muſt make every Religious Heart to bleed, to ſee Religion, which ſhould be the ſtrongeſt of Obligations, and cement of Affection, and Brotherly kindneſs and Compaſſion, made by the perverſe wranglings of paſſionate and froward Men, the Ground of all Animoſity, Hatred, Malice, and Revenge. My Lords and Gentlemen, ſaith he, this Diſquiſition hath coſt the King many a ſigh, many a ſad hour, when he hath conſidered the almoſt irreparable Reproach the Proteſtant Religion hath undergone from the Diviſions and Diſtractions, which have been ſo notorious in this Kingdom.

Biſhop Saunderſon's *Sermons*, ad Aulam, Serm. 9. Sect. 30; Odious to God, and grievous to every Godly Man it is, when ſuch Voices as theſe are heard in the Church, I am of *Paul*, and I am of *Cephas*, and I of *Apollo*.

Mr. *Baxter* in the Life of Sir *Matthew Hale* ſaith, that he much lamented that ſo many Miniſters were ſilenced, the Church weakned, Papiſts ſtrengthned, the cauſe of Love and Piety greatly wronged and hindred by the preſent differences about Conformity.

Doctor Good's Firmianus & Dubitantius, &c. *p.* 152; 'Tis indeed much to be lamented that we ſhould quarrel about Mint and Cummin, to the prejudice of the more weighty and material duties, and ſcandal of our Religion.

Cauſes of the decay of Chriſtian Piety, p. 424. Amidſt all our importunate pretences to Piety, if there be indeed any ſuch thing amongſt us, methinks, it ſhould give us ſome relentings, make us ſadly conſider, what a deplorable Condition we have brought that very Religion into by our Diviſions.

Biſhop of Salisbury's *Exhortation to Peace and Unity*, p. 30. There have ariſen among us ſuch heats, ſo much bitterneſs, ſo violent an averſion to one another, that it muſt needs beget great Grief, and ſad Apprehenſions in all that look on, and judge impartially.

Principles and Practices of ſome Mod. &c. p. 4. It pains me to the Heart when I conſider, to what a prodigious heighth about matters in Religion

Religion our feuds are grown, and how utterly averſe the too many Sects and Parties we are crumbled into, are, to entertain thoughts of Peace and Accommodation.

Unity of the Catholick Church, p. 1. Whoſoever with an Impartial Eye, and a truly Religious concern for the Honour of God, the Credit of the Goſpel, and the Salvation of Men, looks into the State of Chriſtendom, he will ſcarce find any greater cauſe of ſorrowful Reflections, than from the many Diviſions and Animoſities which have diſtracted and ſeparated its Parts.

Mr. Wakes *Serm. on* Rom. 15. 5, 6, 7. I do not believe there is any good Chriſtian ſo little affected with thoſe unhappy Diviſions, under which the Church at this day labours, as not both heartily to deplore them, and to think that nothing could be too much, that might innocently be done on all hands for the redreſſing of them. And to ſhow that theſe Worthy Men had cauſe to complain, and bewail our Diviſions, I ſhall Exemplifie the Evils.

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The Miſchief of our Diviſions.

THE Firſt Miſchief promoting Atheiſme. Arch-Biſhop *Grindal* in his *Fair Warning*, Part 2. Edit. 1663, expreſſed his great fear of two things, Atheiſm and Popery; and both ariſing out of our needleſs differences. By theſe the Enemies of our Religion gain this, that nothing can be eſtabliſhed by Law in the Proteſtant Religion, whoſe every part is not oppoſed by ſome or other of her own Profeſſors; ſo that things continuing looſe and confuſed, the Papiſts have their Opportunity to urge their way, which is attended with Order and Government: And our Religion continuing thus diſtracted and divided, ſome vile Wretches lay hold on the Arguments on one ſide to confute the other, and ſo hope at laſt to deſtroy all.

Judge Hales's *Diſcourſe of Religion* p. 49. When Men ſee ſo much Heat and Paſſion, ſo much Fervour and Contention, ſuch Reproaches and Revilings, ſuch Exaſperations of Authority on either Party, ſuch mutual Proſecutions one of another, that more could not poſſibly be done between Diſſenters in thoſe points, which both agree to be Fundamental; Atheiſtical Spirits are apt to conclude, that probably thoſe points that both ſides ſuppoſed to be of greater moment, are *Ejuſdem Farinæ*, as thoſe in Conteſt, which all Men take to be ſmall and inconſiderable.

Mr. Hooker's *Eccleſiaſtical Politie*, p. 18. *Speaking of Atheiſtical perſons*, by our Contentions their Irreligious Humour is much ſtrengthened: Alſo by the hot purſuit of lower Controverſies among Men profeſſing Religion, and agreeing in the principal Foundation thereof, they conceive hope, that about the higher Principles themſelves, time will cauſe Alteration to grow.

Abner's

Abner's *Plea for Accommodation*, p. 41. It will caſt a ſcandal on Religion, it will open the Mouths of the Adverſaries of the Truth: *The Name of God is blaſphem'd among the Gentiles through you*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 2. 24. The worſt ſort among them ſcoff at it, it is meat and drink to them: And the better ſort are ſtagger'd by it, diſcouraged from coming within the pale of the Church, when they obſerve Chriſtians, as Contentious, as Pagans; Believers as quarrelſome, as Infidels.

Unity of Catholick Chriſtians: The many Diviſions and Animoſities, which have diſtracted and ſeparated the parts of Chriſtendom, theſe have opened the Mouths, and whet the Tongues of its profeſſed Enemies to Reviling and Railings, and Prophane Scoffs againſt our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour, and his Holy Religion, and ſtifled the firſt thoughts of admitting the moſt Convincing Truths to a debate among *Jews*, *Turks*, or *Pagans*, and ſtopt their Ears againſt the wiſeſt Charmes: To no one cauſe can we more reaſonably impute the ſmall progreſs which Chriſtianity hath made in the World for a Thouſand years paſt. The ſame contents have a pernicious influence at home upon the Faith and Manners of thoſe within the Pale of the Church: Men are hereby too ſoon tempted into ſome degree of Sceptiſciſm about very material points of Chriſtian Doctrine, in which they obſerve ſo many to differ among themſelves.

Biſhop Hacket *on* Acts 15. 39. Where many Sects ſpring up, it calls the Truth more into queſtion; and the fewer Proſelytes will be gained.

Secondly, By bringing Men to a Lukewarmneſs and Indifferency in the great things of Religion.

Biſhop Whitgift's *Letter to the Council, in* Fullers *Hiſt.* L. 9. That in King *Edwards* Time, and in the beginning of Queen *Elizabeths* before the heat of theſe Contentions, the Goſpel mightily prevailed. But ſince this Schiſm and Diviſion the contrary Effects have happened.

Deſign of Chriſtian. p. 236. It is too viſibly apparent to be denied, that thoſe who have ſuch a ſcalding hot Zeal, [or contend ſo earneſtly] either for, or againſt things of no certainty, and no neceſſity

ceſſity, are many of them, as their Predeceſſors the Phariſees were, in the very other Extream, as to not a few of the weightieſt matters of Religion.

Conformiſts Plea for the Nonconformiſts, Part 4. pag. 17; It renders the Labours of the Worthieſt ſuſpected and deſpiſed [by the contrary-minded.] The moſt uſeful, profitable, ſearching Books which the World hath moſt need of, are not as much as look'd into by many, but rejected, becauſe the Books of *F——s* (as they are called;) Yea, more, if a Conformiſt have the Name of *F*—— ſome of our Church-P—— will not come nigh the door-poſts of Wiſdom.

Mr. Kidder's *Sermons*, 1 Pet. 3. 11. We quarrel for Trifles, and neglect our unqueſtionable Duty to God and Man.

Doctor Burnet, *Biſhop of* Salisbury, Matth. 12. 25. p. 5. The ill Effects of this Zeal [or Contentiouſneſs] upon our ſelves will be, That as this Temper grows upon us, all our inward ſeriouſneſs will in a great meaſure abate, and turn meerly to a Form: And with that, many other Sins will creep in upon us; we will bear with many ill things in others, becauſe they are of our Party, whom otherwiſe we would deteſt for their ill Lives, and by Converſing much with them, we will contract at leaſt a Familiarity with their Vices, and perhaps imagine, That by our rage and heat we offer up ſome acceptable Sacrifice to God, to compenſate for our other Diſorders.

Cauſes of Decay *of Piety*, p. 251. When bitter Zeal was once fermented, the Orthodoxy or Hereſie of Lives became ſoon Tearms out-dated, and Men were meaſured only by Opinions: *Item p.* 301. They are not much diſcompoſed, to ſee Men of no Religion, 'tis only the having one different from their own that makes their Indignation.

Mr. Cook's *Sermons* on *Rom.* 12. 18. p. 24; What a ſiding is there with this and the other Zealous and Conſcientious Sect, even by thoſe that have neither Zeal, nor Conſcience, but are Deriders of both, and of ſtrict Holineſs in all ſorts of Profeſſors.

Appendix to the third part of the Friendly Debate, p. 143; Doctor *Jackson* tells us the first ground of his dislike to the chief Solicitors of Reformation in our Church, was the deformity of their Zeal, not moving them to redress known Enormities of the Common-wealth, much more material, and much more nearly concerning the Advancement of the Gospel, than those doubtful Controversies of Formality, about which they strove.

Bishop Wilkins *on* Rom. 14. 17, 18; Let a Man but indifferently look round about him, amongst all the kinds of Parties in our times, even those who in his own judgment he esteems the best, and then say; Whether both our Common Peace, and the Power of Religion hath not suffered exceedingly upon the account of our Zeal in lesser matters.

Another Mischief, it destroys Charity.

Doctor Steward's *Englands Case*, p. 26: In such Divisions as these, Men are extreamly apt to forget all Bonds of Peace, and for possession sometimes of a little supposed Truth, quit indeed their whole state of Charity.

Mr. Kidder's Sermons, 1 Pet. 3. 11. We do indeed fiercely contend with each other, but it is because we want Charity; We neglect that plain Duty, whilest we are fond of some Opinion of our own, which is often false, and at best but doubtful.

Pref. to Usher's *Body of Divinity*. Men falling into Sects and Schisms, break the Bond of Love, and fall off from the Communion of Saints, as though it were no Article of their Creed; and being in Love with their own New Tenets, they contend more for them, than any Fundamental Truths, and hate, Malign most bitterly and Uncharitably all those that differ from them in their Opinions, though never so Conscientious and Religious, as though they professed not the same Faith, yea, served not the same God, nor believed in the same Christ.

Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety, p. 284. It is apparent in too many, That they are apt to confine even the Common Offices of Humanit

Humanity to their own Sect; and others who do not so, yet shew so great partiality in dispensing them, as discovers that the Name of Christian is not half so charming as that of their own particular Faction.

Mr. Cook's *Serm.* Rom. 12. 18. How dreadful is it to consider what we may plainly observe, that Dissention, Hatred, and Rancour is not so Violent and Irreconcileable betwixt Extream Oppolites, who dissent utterly (as *Pagans* and *Christians* for Example) as it commonly is betwixt subordinate Professors, who agree upon Generals, and in the main Substance, but dissent in Particulars. Those of the Church of *Rome* this day rather Tolerate, do not so extreamly hate, *a Turk*, a *Jew*, a *Pagan*, as they do a *Protestant*, and some *Protestants* to be quit with them, do in affection and kind usage too plainly prefer a *Heathen* or *Mahometan* before them.

Judge Hales's *Discourses of Relig.* p. 37. It often comes to pass that not only the Common Bond of Charity, and of Christian Love is broken between the Professors of the same Substantials in Christianity, but there is most ordinarily much more Severity, and Persecution and Implacableness, and Irreconcileableness, more Endeavours to undermine, and supplant, and disgrace Dissenters, more Scorns, and vilifying, and reproach, and Insolence one towards another in their vicissitudes of Advantage, than there is between Men of the most loose and prophane Lives, and Professors of Christianity; between Orthodox and Hereticks; nay, between Christians, and Turks, or Infidels many times.

Bishop of Salisburies *Exhortation to Peace*, p. 11. *Luther* and *Zuinglius* difference about the Sacrament has raised such an alienation, that in many places the *Lutherans* are no less, and in some more fierce against the *Calvinists*, than against Papists.

Bishop Reynold's *Brotherly Agreement*, p. 8. Through the prevalency of Corruption, the Affections of good Men so dissenting are often Alienated and Estranged one from another.

Glanvil's *Catholick Charity*, p. 8. Though I see never so much eagerness for an Opinion, or heat for an Indifferent Circumstance,

out the Conſcience of Chriſtian Love, I ſhall never call that forwardneſs for thoſe little things, *Zeal* or *Religion*; yea, though thoſe warm Men ſhould ſacrifice their Lives to their beloved Trifles, I ſhould not think them Martyrs, but fear rather, that they went from one fire to another, and a worſe, as 1 *Cor.* 13. 3.

Mr. Cook's *Sermons on* Rom. 12. 18. p. 3. Though ſome divided Parties may in their ſeveral wayes exerciſe many Acts of true and ſubſtantial Worſhip, yet whileſt the Members thereof retain in their hearts any unpeaceable Diſpoſition, or bitter Envy (though thay call it Zeal) againſt another Party, all the Effects of their Religion muſt neceſſarily be null and void; becauſe in our Religion we can find no ſort of diſpenſation for an Uncharitable Temper.

Glanvil's *Catholick Char.* p. 55, 56. If therefore we are Friends to Chriſtian Love, let us avoid, and oppoſe this its moſt fatal Enemy; and conſider that we ſhould exerciſe our Zeal about the neceſſary, certain things, and our Charity about the reſt.

That Diviſions are Ruinous of a Church.

Bucer; I ſee, with what Art Satan doth reſiſt, [*i. e.* the Reformation;] While he goeth about to ſtir up ſo many pernitious Contentions, as well in Doctrine, as Rites. For ſurely, except we remove ſo manifeſt diſhonourings of God, whereby the whole Kingdom of God may be renewed. Oh how intolerable Wrath of God ſhall be kindled againſt this Rhealm! In another place, With this crafty ſlight hath that Ancient Enemy driven miſerable *Germany* unto theſe preſent Calamities, wherewith they be now oppreſſed, (in King *Edward* the VI. dayes) God forbid, Chriſt Jeſus, I ſay, our only Saviour, forbid, that he prevail againſt *England* with this crafty ſubtilty.

Biſhop Andrew's *Sermon*, p. 913. Let us begin with the motion for Fire from Heaven upon the *Samaritans*, *Luke* 9. 55. Let us begin with that which was the beginning of all this quarrel, diſſent in Religion between the *Samaritan* and the *Jew*. We ſee the fruit of it here, and what Spirit it makes Men of, mutual and mortal hatred breaking forth upon every occaſion. And theſe two the *Samaritans* and the *Jews* made not an end of it, till it made an end of them. In *Joſephus* you ſhall

ſee

ſee in the days of *Claudius* (*Cumanus* then Deputy) the very like quarrel to this here, upon the very ſame occaſion, taken up wholly by the *Zelotæ*, and purſued hard, opened the way to the *Jews* War, which never ended till the utter rooting out, and deſolation of them both.

Injunct. of K. James I. *to the Biſhops*, 1626. One thing there is, which proves a great hinderance of this State, and not continued amongſt the people without great offence againſt God, detriment both to Church and State, and our great diſſervice in this and all other buſineſs: It is the breach of Unity which is grown too great and common amongſt all ſorts of men: The danger of this goes far; for in all States it has made way for enemies to enter.

Mr. Hookers *Anſwer to Mr.* Travers *Supplicat.* p. 30. There can come nothing of Contention, but the natural waſte of the parties contending, till a common Enemy dance in the aſhes of them both.

Halls *Works*, *Biſhop of* Norwich, *p.* 413. If we deſire the grief of our common Mother, the languiſhing of the Goſpel, the extirpation of Religion, the loſs of Poſterity, the advantage of our Adverſaries, which way could theſe be effected more, than by our Diviſions?

Mr. Vertues *Plea for Peace*, p. 25. Falling out among our ſelves we ſtand aloof off one from another, ſuffering our ſelves to be devoured by the common Foe, while we look on: Yea happily we ſhall be ready to act one againſt another, and ſo to ſave the Enemy a labour; as *Moab* againſt *Ammon*, and *Ammon* againſt *Moab*, and *Edom* againſt both, ſheathing their Swords each in other; ſo that *Jehoſaphat* and his *Jews* needed not to ſtrike a ſtroke, 2 *Chron.* 20. 3. *Iſa.* 9. 21. *Gal.* 5. 15. It is a *Dutch* device, and a good one, to this purpoſe, of two earthen pots ſwimming on the water, *frangimur ſi collidimur*, we are broken all to pieces if we claſh one againſt another. *Idem*, p. 31. Beſides that God doth often puniſh breaches and diviſions in the Church among Chriſtians, by raiſing up ſome ſtorm againſt them, which may teach them better to agree; we being in this too like to Sheep, which on a fair Sun-ſhine day are ſcattered each from other upon the Mountains; but a ſtorm brings them together: So doth *Euſebius* relate, that the Church enjoyed much peace and freedom immediately

diately before the Perſecution raiſed againſt it by *Dioclesian*; and making no better uſe of it than to fall aſunder into Diviſions and Factious Contentions, inſtantly God took a courſe by way of puniſhment to cover the Daughter of *Zion* with a Cloud in his Anger; and to caſt down from Heaven to Earth the beauty of *Iſrael*, and not to remember his footſtool in the day of his Anger, ſetting up the Right-hand of his Churches enemies, and making their adverſaries to rejoyce. *Lam.* 2. 1. *Pſal.* 39. 42.

Mr. Ward *of* Ipſwich's *Sermons*, p. 253. Charity, Charity is the builder of Churches: Strife about trifles hath waſted many famous ones, and placed the Temple of *Mahomet* where the Golden Candleſtick was wont to ſtand. We pity the former Ages contending about leavened and unleavened Bread, keeping of *Eaſter*, Faſting on Sundays, the future Ages will do the like by us.

Pygots Abners *Plea for Accommodation in* 43. p. 33. Take heed, your private diſſentions do not expoſe you as a prey to the common adverſary. I remember the dying Fathers admonition to his Sons: Having call'd them all together, he cauſed a Faggot to be brought into the Room, and commanded the ſtouteſt of them to break it; they tryed one after another, but none of them could do it, then he bade them undo the band, and take them ſtick by ſtick, and ſo they ſnapped them aſunder like a twined thread: Thus ſhall it be with you, my Sons, (ſaith the Old Man) when I am dead, if you continue united and knit together in the bond of Peace and Love, no Enemies ſhall be able to hurt you; but if you once break the bond, and fall into differences among your ſelves, you'l preſently be broken to pieces, and come to nothing. *Item*, p. 42. The wild Boar of the Foreſt, I mean the *Turk*, had never made ſuch inrodes into *Chriſtendom*, had it not been for the diſſention of Chriſtian Brethren.

Eikon Basil. *Upon the Rebellion in* Ireland, *Ejac.* 3. Becauſe we have not more loved thy Truth, and practiced in Charity, thou haſt ſuffered a Spirit of error and bitterneſs, of mutual and mortal hatred to ariſe among us.

Biſhop Reynolds *Broth. Agreement*, p. 18. Cites holy *Cyprian*, who in his time looked upon it as one great cauſe of that ſore Perſecution,

cution, which God sent upon the Church: Had Unanimity and Peace, said he, been amongst the Brethren, we had long ago obtained our Petitions from Divine Mercy, neither had we been thus long tossed with those Tempests, which endanger our Faith and Salvation: *Imo vero nec venissent Fratribus hac mala, si in unum fraternitas fuisset animata.*

Bishop Hacket *on* Acts 15. 39. *p.* 8, 9. The passage is well known about *Constantine* the Great, how he remov'd from his Palace in the *East*, because every corner of the Imperial City was filled with adverse disputations about Religion; much more you may presume that God will depart from that Church, where the flames of notorious discords are.

Causes of decay of Christian Piety, p. 304. As to the extirpation of the *Eastern* Churches, he that shall examine the Records of those Times will have cause to say, their janglings and divisions were not only in a Moral and Divine, but even in a proper natural sence the Instruments of it, the *Turk* only coming in at those breaches which themselves have made.

Glanvells *Cath. Charity*, p. 17. The greatest evils that have, or can happen to the Church, have been the effects of the decay of Charity, and of those intestine divisions that have grown up in it: From these she hath always suffered more, than from external Persecutions. The flames within have consumed her, when those from without have only sing'd her garments.

Bishop of Salisbury's *Exhort. to Peace and Union*, *on* Matth. 12. 25. *p.* 2. There is nothing that defeats the end of Religion more, and doth more naturally lead to all manner of sin and impieties, which must end in Temporal as well as Eternal ruine, then our Divisions. *Pag.* 9. In Divisions either party will be so intent on their little designs, that the whole may perish; and they will bite and devour one another, till they are either consumed one of another, or made an easie Conquest to those that both see and improve all their advantages.

Item, *Exhort.* p. 10, 11. The *Africans* continued quarrelling about *Cecilian* and his ordainers, till the *Vandals* came and destroyed both.

both the one and the other. *Item*, p. 11. And can we think without astonishment, that the difference of the Procession of the Holy Ghost could ever have rent the *Greek* and *Latin* Churches so violently one from another, that the *Latins* rather than assist the other, look'd on till they were destroyed by the *Ottoman* Family, which has ever since been so terrible a Neighbour to the rest of *Europe*.

Mr. Hesketh *on* Lam. 3. 20, 21. *p.* 25. It were seasonable to have made some reflections upon the unchristian heats and unreasonable differences that are among us, things that render us not only sinners, but great fools, and plain contrivers for our own Ruine. For these are evils, that will destroy us alone, and by their own weight sink us into destruction. Divided Societies last not long, the experience of all Ages confirms it for a Truth; and I do not see what reason we have to expect an exemption from the common fate.

Dr. Mores *Mystery of Iniquity*, p. 554. What harm is it to presage so well of the Reformation, as that after the decursion of the years of their Childhood, God will ripen them into a more Manly sence of the great and indispensable Duties of the Gospel; that he will not tolerate nor connive any longer at their Childish squabling about Nut-shells, Counters and Cherry-stones; and menace them even with destruction, if they leave not off their animosities and asperities of mind about toys and trifles, and hold fast to the Royal Law of Love? *If ye bite and worry one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.* Gal. 5. 15.

Mr. Hancocks *Sermon on* Luke 19. 42. If the judgments of God, which we have already groaned under, cannot; sure the dangers that threaten us and our Religion, might help to abate our heats, and suppress our differences: Did not Christianity decay in the Church of *Corinth* as their Schisms and Factions increased? *Pag.* 31. Were not the former Conquests of these Nations, the effects of our own Divisions? God grant that saying may never be applyed to us, which was used of our Fore-Fathers, that whilst they severally quarrel'd among themselves, they were all overcome by the common Enemy. *Item*, They are convinced, that a number of petty Sects and divided Interests cannot long maintain their ground against the *Roman* Forces.

Mr. Cooks

Mr. Cooks *Sermon on* Rom. 12. 18. *p.* 4. Were it not for that ſecurity, *the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*, (that is the Church) the unhappy contentions about it, the worſt of Devils would ſoon haſten its deſtruction.

Mr. Jekylls *Sermon on* Jer. 5. 29. *p.* 21. But there is one thing, which if not ſpeedily prevented, will before we are aware let in that which we ſo much fear, and cry out againſt; (*viz.* Popery) and which perhaps too too many of us, more or leſs, may be acceſſary to; I mean thoſe unnatural hearts and diviſions amongſt our ſelves, amidſt which, though we are not altogether ſwerved from the Form, yet we are ſtrangely degenerated from the true Spirit and Power of Godlineſs and Chriſtianity. —— How ſad the effect and conſequence of theſe heart-burnings and animoſities, unchriſtian ſtrifes and debates will be, I am afraid to think of! *Item*, p. 25. We are diſtracting our own Devotions, yea and provoking (I had almoſt ſaid devouring) one another, whilſt our Adverſaries in the day they look for (which God grant may never come) will make no difference, but ſwallow us up together.

Principles and Practices, p. 10. *of Ep.* It is high time to be reconciled to Moderation and Sobriety, to lay aſide our uncharitable, and therefore unchriſtian heats againſt each other, and to throw water upon thoſe flames, that threaten our deſtruction, (and but for Gods infinite Mercy, would have effected it before now) inſtead of adding more fewel unto it.

Mr. *Kidder* on 1 *Pet.* 3. 11. *p.* 29. The ſeveral Sects and Quarrels of the *Jews* among themſelves, and the fury of their Zealots, were but a prologue to their miſerable deſtruction.

Biſhop Taylors *Coll. of Diſcourſes; Ep. before Liberty of Proph.* For my own particular, I cannot but expect that God in his Juſtice ſhould enlarge the bounds of the *Turkiſh* Empire, or ſome other way puniſh Chriſtians, by reaſon of their pertinacious diſputings about things unneceſſary, undeterminable and unprofitable.

Cauſes of the Decay of Chriſtian Piety, p. 427. It is the uſual Oeconomy of Divine Juſtice to make our Crimes our Puniſhment,

and to give us up to thoſe ills, which were at firſt our own depraved choice: And God knows, we have too much reaſon to fear this may be our caſe; that we who have ſo perverſly violated all the bonds of Unity, wantonly wrangled our ſelves out of all inclinations to Peace, ſhould never be able to reſume them. *Item*, p. 428. This, alaſs! as it is the fearfulleſt, ſo is it the probableſt iſſue of our wild contentions, ſuch as nothing but the miraculous effluxes of Divine Clemency can avert.

To conclude, as well we may, with this as an undoubted Truth, from Mr. *Kidders* Sermon on 1 *Pet.* 3. 11. *p.* 22. Theſe Contentions have done more miſchief than all the Perſecutions put together; more have fallen, and more dangerouſly this way, than by the Swords of Tyrants, and avowed Enemies of our Religion.

Arguments for taking the Ceremonies away, or leaving the Uſe of them indifferent; eſpecially the Sign of the Croſs.

HEre is the moſt proper place to premiſe ſomewhat concerning the Lawfulneſs of Ceremonies, leaſt I ſhould in any thing which follows be thought to condemn my own practice, in point of Conformity to theſe Ceremonies.

As to Kneeling at the Sacrament, I think the Rubrick ſhould ſatisfie Perſons; it ſpeaks very plainly: It is hereby declared, that no Adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread and Wine, there Bodily received, or unto any Corporeal Preſence of Chriſts Natural Fleſh and Blood. For the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain ſtill in their very Natural Subſtances, and

and therefore may not be Adored, (for that were Idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians) and the Natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven, *&c.*

Mr. Bayns *Christian Letters*, p. 201. Kneeling is neither an occasion, nor by participation Idolatry. Kneeling never bred Bread-Worship, and our Doctrine of the Sacrament known to all the World, doth free us from suspition of Adoration in it. Thus he though a Nonconformist.

Mr. Tombs *Theodulia*, p. 168. That whatsoever Gesture our Saviour used it doth not oblige us, because the Gesture seems not to have been of choice used by Christ. 2. Because St. *Paul* omits the Gesture, which he would not have done, if it had been binding. 3. He mentions the Night, and calls it the Lords Supper; and if the Time be not necessary, much less the Gesture. 4. If the Gesture doth oblige, then Christians must use the self-same that Christ used, *i. e.* Lying down or Leaning, *&c.* Mr. *Baxter* in his *Christian Directory* (I think speaking of the Sacrament) tells us, he thinks Mr. *Paybodies* Book in defence of *Kneeling* to be unanswerable.

As to the Surplice; *Platina* mentions it to be brought in very early into the Church, in the days of the good Bishops of *Rome*, *Anno Domini* 250, by *Stephen* a Martyr under *Decius* the Emperour; And none can deny but that in the Apostles days, after Baptism (the Baptized in those hot Countries of the *East*, being commonly at least dipped or plunged in the Water with their naked Bodies) the persons Baptized put on new white Vestments to shew the Purity of a Christian: Whence the Lords day after *Easter* (which *Easter* was their chief time of Baptizing) was called *Dominica in Albis*, the Lords day in White. *Mr.* Leighs *Annotations on the New Testament* tell you those expressions of putting on the Lord Jesus, and putting off the Old Man have allusion to the Garments. *Peter Martyr* speaks in his Answer to Bishop *Hoopers* Letter: The Defenders of this Ceremony may pretend some honest and just signification, and *Zepperus* himself, (though no Friend to the Sign of the Cross in the Baptismal Office, as Mr. *Sprint* tells us in his *Cassander Anglicanus*) speaking of the Papists, saith thus; We read nothing of the Superstitious Habits in the Monuments of Antiquity, except only of the White Vesture; *Qua usi*

ſunt ſine ſuperſtitione in ſignum & Commone factionem honeſtatis vitæ. So that if it were a ſignificative Ceremony (as it is not in the Church of *Englands* uſe of it) yet in their judgments the uſe of it might be innocent.

Biſhop Taylors *Ductor Dubitantium*, p. 668. Great Reaſon have we to honour the Wiſdom of the Church of *England*, which hath in all her Offices retained but one Ritual or Ceremony that is not of Divine Ordinance, or Apoſtolical Practice, and that is the Croſs at Baptiſm: Which, though it be a ſignificant Ceremony, and of no other uſe, yet as it is a compliance with the Antient Church, ſo is it very innocent in it ſelf, and being one alone is not troubleſome [or burthenſome]. Archbiſhop *Whitgift* ſaid, the Surplice was not enjoyned as a ſignificant Ceremony. The Canon about the Surplice mentioneth nothing of uſing it for ſignification of purity or unſpotted innocency. We do not wear it as monitory or inſtructive to keep the inner man pure and clean, but as a Garment of uſe in the Antient Church, and tranſmitted down from them to us, and retained at our Reformation: And ſome urge it to be decent, and no ways unbecoming a Miniſter of the Goſpel, who may wear certainly White as lawfully as Black, without placing Holyneſs or Unholyneſs in any Garment. If we ſee not ſo great reaſon for the impoſition or continuance, yet we may ſee ſufficient reaſon for the ſubmiſſion. It is not uſed by us as by the Papiſts, who muſt have it hallowed or conſecrated by Praying over it, that it may defend him that wears it from the Devil. They uſe it indeed with a Superſtitious opinion of Holyneſs, but we have no Conſecrating Surplices, nor any ſuch opinion that it is a fence againſt the Devil, or preſervative from his aſſaults and temptations.

Several Nonconformiſts have ſaid, they would be content to Preach the Goſpel in a Fools coat rather than be ſilent; as the Famous Mr. *Daille* of *France* being asked his judgment by ſome Nonconformiſts of *England*, ſaid (as I am told by a *French* Miniſter, and that he had ſeen it mentioned in a Book wrote by one of our Biſhops) That our Ceremonies *were good*, and before he would make a rent in the Church for ſuch things as the Surplice, *&c.* If the King of *France* would give him leave to Preach at *Paris*, (which the King forbid him) he would Preach, though it were in a Fools coat.

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As to the Lawfulneſs of the Sign of the Croſs at Baptiſm, It is, I Baptize, I Baptize thee in the Name of the Father, *&c.* which is all that is Eſſential to Baptiſm, or the Subſtance of that Ordinance: Then it follows, We receive this [Baptized] Child into the Congregation of Chriſts Flock, as the Priviledge. Baptiſm makes him a Member of the Catholick Church, and particularly of that Church into which he is Baptized: But the owning and receiving into Communion is the Churches Act. Then follows, and ſign him with the Sign of the Croſs in token, *&c.* as ſignificative, and with the words declarative of that Duty, which he is obliged and bound unto by Baptiſm, to own the Faith of Chriſt Crucified, *&c.* And though the Words are, In token that he ſhall not be aſhamed to own, *&c.* It is only in the Judgment of Charity, what the Church hopeth and expecteth from him hereafter, when he is come to years to know Good and Evil, his Faith, Profeſſion, and Obedience to the Trinity, according to his Baptiſm. And thus Dr. *Bourges* in his Subſcription with Explication of his meaning, allowed by King *James* the Firſt, and the Arch-Biſhop of *Canterbury*, and declared to be the ſenſe of the Church of *England*: Where the Book ſaith, And do ſign him with the Sign of the Croſs, in token, *&c.* I underſtand, ſaith he, that Book not to mean, That the Sign of the Croſs hath any Vertue in it to effect or further this Duty, but only to intimate and expreſs by that Ceremony (by which the Ancients did avow their profeſſion of Chriſt Crucified) what the Congregation hopeth and expecteth hereafter from that Infant: And therefore alſo when the Twentieth Canon ſaith, That the Infant is by that Sign Dedicated unto the Service of Chriſt, I underſtand that Dedication to import, not a real Conſecration of the Child, which was done in Baptiſm it ſelf; but only a Ceremonial Declaration of that Dedication, like as the Prieſt is ſaid to make clean the Leper, whoſe being clean he only declared.

There was undoubtedly a lawful uſe of the Croſs in ſome Primitive Chriſtians, while they lived among profeſſed *Jews* and *Heathens*, Enemies of the Croſs of Chriſt, as *Phil.* 3. 18. upbraiding the Chriſtians that their God dyed upon a Croſs. It began at his Crucifixion, *Matth.* 27. 41, 42; *The Chief Prieſts mocking him with the Scribes and Elders ſaid, If he be the King of Iſrael, let him now come down from the Croſs, and we will believe him.* The more others ſcoffed at the Chriſtians for their Crucified Saviour, with the greater Courage, Reſolution, and Conſtancy

Conſtancy did the Chriſtians own and make profeſſion of him. And this was a ſign profeſſing Chriſt, which at the ſight of *Jews* and *Infidels*, in the Markets, and any where elſe was of common uſe among the Chriſtians, uſed at their Meals many times, and Tranſlated to Baptiſm. When the Empire became Chriſtian, *Conſtantine* uſed it, and others in their Enſigns of War, to ſignifie, Chriſt Crucified was the God they owned, and expected Victory in Battel from him. In their Coats of Arms, in their Coynes at this day, it is uſed as of Old, to ſhew the Religion of the Perſons, or the Countries, that they were Chriſtians. If any Object that was a Civil uſe of it, and not Religious, I ſay it was of Religious ſignification there. Yet indeed with *Peter Martyr*, for mine own part, I wiſh that all things may be done ſimpliciſſime, moſt free from Humane mixtures in the Worſhip of God; Again, Its ſignification and uſe is, *ad hominem*, and not *ad Deum*. For firſt, If it were permanent, and imprinted on the Forhead (which in Scripture is uſed to ſignifie boldneſs and confidence, in a good, and in all ill ſenſe, as *Ezek.* 3. 8. *Jer.* 3. 3.) And ſo the ſign of the Croſs made there ſignifieth of the Child boldneſs, Chriſtian Courage and Confidence, that he ſhall not be aſhamed, *&c.*) it would ſignifie to Men, and not to God; unto Chriſtians, that he was one of their number. Secondly, The uſe of it among the Primitive Chriſtians was to ſignifie to Chriſtians among themſelves, or more eſpecially to Jews and Heathens their Chriſtian Profeſſion. Thirdly, The Diſſenters call them ſignificant teaching ſigns, and bring that as an Argument againſt them, but do we teach God or Man, ſurely Man is fit for Inſtruction. And as to Addition, the Curſe is equally againſt diminiſhing, as adding: But the Lovekiſs, *Signaculum reconciliationis*; Waſhing the Diſciples Feet a token of Humility; The Feaſts of Charity mention'd at the Sacrament by St. *Jude*; the Community of Goods, the Deaconeſſes, *&c.* Things of this Nature are not of the ſubſtance of the Word, or the Ordinances, but are Circumſtantials, and may be changed, added, or taken away ſafely. I could cite too an Eminent Nonconformiſt, where he ſaith, it cannot be called an Addition in Scripture ſenſe, unleſs the Governours ſtamp Holyneſs upon it, or Neceſſity, as a neceſſary Duty, Doctrinal Neceſſity he means: Or unleſs by adding they mean, giving the ſame Efficacy to Humane Inſtitutions as God doth to his, by making them to confer Grace upon the rightly diſpoſed; and by diminiſhing that the Service is not compleat without it. I ſhall conclude

with

with a saying of Mr. *Calvin*, *Let not any think me so austere or bound up, as to forbid a Christian to accommodate himself to the Papists, in any Ceremony or Observance: For it is not my purpose to condemn any thing, but what is clearly Evil, and openly Vitious.* I have said thus much, lest some that are uncharitable to our Church should think, I wrote, Because I was pinched, and could not tell how to satisfie my Conscience in Conformity.

Doctor More's *Mystery of Godliness*, Pref. Sect. 10. The Cross, so seasonable at the first Institution of it, while professed Pagans, were mingled among Christians, and so significant alwayes, that if the Church cannot make such an Additional as this (in his Judgment) she can make none at all.

True State of Prim. Christ. p. 18; I will name another Ceremony, which gives great offence with greater reason; the bowing towards the Altar, which in my own Judgment I allow, and practise in some measure, when I come into such Congregations as generally use it, avoiding still to give offence to any, as far as I may with safe Conscience. I affirm it is a very fitting thing to shew Reverence in the House of God, and to shew it by bowing as well as any other means, and to bow that way, to the East as well as any other way: Bowing towards the Altar is grown into abuse, by the Papists supposing Christ to be Corporally present there. With us the Minister bows to shew some particular Reverence in that place, where the Blessed Sacrament is Consecrated. Let this pass for good, though something also may be said against it.

Ceremonies not to be Innovated or Multiplyed.

Bishop Taylor's *Ductor Dubit.* L. 3. Ch. 4. Rule 4. Sect. 19, 20. That this Rule of Order and Decency is not to be extended to such Decencies as are only Ornament, but is to be limited to such as only rescue from Confusion; the reason is, because the Prelates and Spiritual

Spiritual Guides cannot do their Duty, unleſs things be ſo orderly, as that there be no Confuſion, but if it can go beyond this Limit, then it can have no Natural Limit, but may extend to Sumptuouſneſs, to Ornament for Churches, to rich Utenſils, &c. But becauſe this is too ſubject to abuſe, and gives a Secular Power over Mens Eſtates, and is not any part of Spiritual Government, it's more than Chriſt gave to Miniſters. *Id. Rules to his Clergy.* 39. R. Let no Miniſter of a Pariſh introduce any Ceremony, Rites or Geſtures, though with ſome ſeeming Piety and Devotion, but what are commanded by the Church, and Eſtabliſhed by Law, and let theſe alſo be wiſely and uſefully Explicated to the People, that they may underſtand the Reaſons and Meaſures of Obedience, but let there be no more introduced, leſt the People be burthened unneceſſarily, and tempted, or divided.

Idem, And though ſignificant Ceremonies may be for Edification, yet it is to be conſidered, whether the introducing of ſuch things does not deſtroy the Church, not only in her Chriſtian Liberty, but in the Simplicity and Purity, and Spirituality of her Religion, by inſenſibly changing it into a Ceremonial and External Service.

True State of the Primitive Church, p. 18. With us the Miniſter bows at the Altar, to ſhew ſome particular Reverence in that place, where the Bleſſed Sacrament is Conſecrated; though ſomething may be ſaid againſt that: Yet I pray tell me, Why the Reader paſſing from one ſide of the Church to the other, and the Miniſter paſſing from one end of the Altar to the other, bows again. I verily believe 'tis meerly a cauſeleſs Cuſtom taken up one from another, (the common beginning of all Superſtitions) having no reaſon for it, but much againſt it, giving thereby great ſcandal to weak ones, and ground of ſlaunder to malitious ones, who lay hold on any occaſions to accuſe them of Papiſtry. For certainly it is done with little or no Reaſon, or with a great deal of Superſtition.

Serious and Compaſſionate Enquiry, &c. To do all that I may without danger to my ſelf, and not at all to regard what others can comply with; or, to uſe my own Liberty to the offence of others, is to be Unchriſtian and Uncharitable. And in this ſence only are we to underſtand all the Diſcourſes of the Apoſtle about Scandal and Offence, where there is *Materia libera*. For he that will provoke his Brother to ſin, by doing

ing that which he may omit without sin, is guilty of sin in so doing. *It.* p. 245. To the end that we may prevail with them to deny themselves in somethings for the Publick Good, we should do well to give them Examples of our own Self denyal, and abridging our own Liberty, in Condescention to them in such things as are not the matter of the Law; and that we will not out-run the Laws, to contradict and vex them, in what we may forbear without sin.

Doctor Barrow's *Sermons of Love*, p. 181. An Act of Charity to abstain from any thing, which either may occasion him to commit Sin, or disaffect him to Religion, or discourage him in the practice of Duty, or which any wise may discompose, vex, or grieve him, (the Apostle having said) *That if thy Brother be not grieved with thy Meat, now walkest thou not Charitably, Rom.* 14. 15.

Having premiſed ſomewhat in Defence of the Ceremonies, and againſt Innovations &c. I ſhall proceed to thoſe

Arguments for leaving the Uſe of the Ceremonies Indifferent.

ARGUMENT I.

CONſider firſt, That by leaving the Ceremonies Indifferent, Conformiſts have their Liberty allowed them to uſe them. Where Miniſters ſcruple the uſe of that ſign of the Croſs, but the Parents are for it, they may get any Neighbouring Miniſter that is of the ſame Opinion to Baptize their Child after their manner. If their Parents be againſt it, the Miniſter holding it but a thing indifferent, why may he not forbear the uſe of it for ſatisfaction of the Parents?

II. I do not read of any that lived and dyed Nonconformiſts, but ſcrupled the Sign of the Croſs, which ſhows they are not ſatisfied in Conſcience about it: But our Conſciences will bear the yielding of it up for Peace, becauſe we hold Ceremonies to be ἀδιάφορα, things Indifferent, in themſelves neither good nor evil. If indifferent, let us not contend ſo earneſtly for their uſe, as for neceſſary things, and matters of Faith, but manifeſt an indifferency for their Continuance, or Abrogation.

III. The Ceremonies are *inutilia Cœlo*, of little or no uſe for the winning of Souls; and I ſee not but that Prelates Speech was truly Chriſtian, who ſaid we had rather loſe a Ceremony than a Soul. As it was ſaid of ſome Meats, neither if we eat them, are we the better, nor if we eat not, are we the worſe; ſo we are nothing better'd by theſe Ceremonies. Indifferent things have no Spiritual Vertue or Efficacy in them. We do not hold with the Papiſts that Surplices, being

ing hallowed defend him that wears them from the Devil. And Canon Thirty, ſaith, that the Sign of the Croſs doth neither add any thing to the Vertue and Perfection of Baptiſm: Nor being omitted, doth detract any thing from the Effect and Subſtance of it.

IV. The Reaſon for the firſt uſe of the Ceremonies ceaſeth much. They were kept, partly out of Compliance with the Papiſts, to gain upon them, becauſe the People could not be ſo wholly drawn off from the uſe of the Sign of the Croſs; and ſomewhat too out of Compliance with the Primitive Chriſtians, who uſed the Sign of the Croſs often, and very early after the Apoſtles dayes, as *Juſtin Martyr* ſaith, *in foro, in agris*. And thus the Church of *England* ſhowed ſhe left the Church of *Rome* only in her Innovations, and would go along with her in what the Ancient Church practiſed, that ſhe might be the more inexcuſable, and juſtly condemned, if ſhe rejected Communion with us. But now the caſe is altered, the Papiſts are hardned by it, and encouraged, upbraiding us (as Biſhop *Uſher* ſaid of them) If your Fleſh be not good, why do you drink of our Broth? But our Proteſtant Brethren ſtumble at it, and it is diſuſed by other Reformed Churches; and therefore in condeſcention to the weakneſs of the one, and Uniformity with the other Reformed Churches, perhaps it were to be wiſhed that now the uſe of it were forborn.

V. Againſt the Impoſition of the Ceremonies is becauſe of the many Objections againſt them, eſpecially againſt the Croſs, as a ſignificant Ceremony, not inſtituted by Chriſt; as a Dedicating Covenanting Sign, as a Sacramental Sign, or as having the ſemblance of a Sacrament, or againſt the uſe of it in that place immediately after Baptiſm, and the Duties of the Baptized more expreſly affixed to that Sign, than to the Sacrament it ſelf; as a *medium cultus*. Again, as Superſtitious and Scandalous, becauſe of the Popiſh abuſe of it; as a curſed Addition to the Word of God, and the Sacrament of Baptiſm; as impoſed on Miniſters and Children of thoſe Parents that ſcruple, and are not ſatisfied in Conſcience about the uſe of it, as well as thoſe that are; as the Likeneſs and Image of Chriſt Crucified; forbidden ſay they in the Second Commandment; as will Worſhip, as diſuſed in other Proteſtant Churches; as againſt Chriſtian Liberty, as unſuitable to the ſimplicity of the Goſpel, as needleſs, unprofitable, and cauſing Diviſions in the Church. Although none of the Objections, or Argu-

ments that I can find against it, convince me that the ſubmiſſion to it, and the uſe of it is utterly unlawful, yet it ſhould ſeem inconvenient to continue a thing which hath ſo plauſible and numerous Objections againſt it.

VI. For making ſome allowances in reſpect of the Ceremonies; God himſelf diſpenſeth with his own Commands about Rituals, or ſmaller matters in caſe of neceſſity, or when great good or hurt ſtands on the other ſide to outweigh them. 1 *Sam.* 21. 6. *David* in his hunger eats the Shewbread, which only the Prieſts were to eat, and Chriſt on the ſame account lets the Diſciples pluck and rub the ears of Corn on the Sabbath-day, 1 *Kings* 8. 64. *Solomon* hallows the middle of the Court for an Altar, becauſe the Brazen Altar of the Lord was too little for the Offerings. A multitude did eat the Paſſover otherwiſe than appointed, 2 *Chron* 30. 18. on the Second Moneth; for they could not keep it at the time appointed, as the Second and Third Verſes. An Ox or an Aſs is to be watered, or pulled out of a Pit on the Sabbath day: *Periculum vitæ diſſolvit Sabbatum*, (as the Proverb ſays) though by many good Men, a matter of Controverſie, or thought to be Moral and not Ceremonial. Surely then leſſer matters upon great and weighty Occaſions, when Spiritually neceſſary for the Churches Good and Peace, and for the Labours of able Men in the Work of the Miniſtry, may very well be diſpenſed with. For Humane Ceremonies cannot pretend to a like Authority, or Neceſſity, much leſs a greater than thoſe of Divine appointment.

That Ceremonies muſt yield to Subſtance.

Βασιλ. Δῶρον, Or, *King* James I. *Inſtructions to his Son*, p. 15. Learn wiſely to diſcern between points of Salvation and indifferent things, betwixt Subſtance and Ceremonies: As for the latter ſpare not to uſe, or alter them, as the neceſſity of the Times ſhall require.

Biſhop Halls *Works*, p. 1092. Our Saviour juſtifies the act of *Abimelechs* giving *David* Holy Bread and the Sword: Ceremonies muſt give place to Subſtance; God will have Mercy and not Sacrifice: Charity is the ſumme and the end of the Law; that muſt be aimed at in all our actions.

Biſhop

Bishop Taylors *Duct. Dubit.* p. 735. Thus if a Church commands such Ceremonies to be used, such Orders, such Prayers, they are to be observed when they may; but if I fall into the hands of an enemy to that manner of Worship, who will kill, or afflict me greatly for using it, I am in that case disobliged, [even as *Periculum vitæ dissolvit Sabbatum*].

Serious and Compassionate Enquiry, p. 159. On *Davids* eating the Shew-bread; It is sufficiently intimated, that God doth not only prefer Moral acts before Ceremonial, but also doth make great allowances, limitations and exceptions in the one case and not in the other: For it is as if our Saviour had said; Had you censorious Pharisees understood either God or Religion, you would have known that so long as there is not Contumacy and Contempt in the neglect of those Rituals, but the excuse of a just necessity, or the Rational Consideration of a greater good to preponderate the omission, God doth not impute it for a sin.

Bishop Saunderson *on* Rom. 3. 8. *Sect.* 31. Affirmative Duties do not *obligare ad semper* (as being many it is impossible they should.) And many times Duties otherwise necessary, in case of Superiour Reason and Duties, do cease to be necessary *pro hic & nunc*; and then to omit them is not to do evil.

Bishop Wilkins, p. 413, 414. Now Divine Laws themselves are capable of relaxation, which is the meaning of that Proverbial saying so frequent in Scripture, That God will have Mercy and not Sacrifice; and therefore much more will Humane Laws admit it.

True state of the Primitive Church. As to Ceremonies, I wonder men of any tolerable discretion should be so eager either for or against them, our Salvation no ways depending on them, but much hazarded by our contentions about them, breaking Peace, the principal thing recommended to us by the Gospel of Peace.

VIII. Another Argument for Concessions in the Ceremonies; several of our Eminent Men in Queen *Elizabeths* Reign were for the taking of them away, as their Letters to *Bullinger* inform us, mentioned by the Bishop of *Salisbury* in his Travels; Letters of things remarkable in *Switzerland*, *&c.* by Dr. *Burnet* Bishop of *Salisbury*, tell us, that there is a vast Collection of Letters at *Zurich*, written either to *Bullinger* or by him. Bishop *Jewel* in a Letter, *Feb.* 8. 1566. wishes that the Vestments together with all the other Remnants of Popery, might be thrown both out of their Churches, and out of the minds

of

of the People, and laments the Queens fixedneſs to them: So that ſhe would ſuffer no change to be made. And in *January* the ſame year, *Sands* Archbiſhop of *York* writes, *Conceditur de veſtibus Papiſticis utendis vel non utendis, dabit Deus his quoque finem.*

Horn Biſhop of *Wincheſter*, in a Letter, *July* 16. 1565. He writes of the Act concerning the Habits with great regret, and expreſſes ſome hopes that it might be Repealed next Seſſion of Parliament, if the Popiſh Party did not hinder it, and he ſeems to ſtand in doubt, whether he ſhould Conform himſelf to it or not, upon which he deſires *Bullingers* advice. And in many Letters writ on that Subject, it is aſſerted, that both *Cranmer* and *Ridley* intended to procure an Act for aboliſhing the Habits, and that they only defended their Lawfulneſs, but not their fitneſs, and therefore they blamed private perſons that refuſed to obey the Laws.

Biſhop *Grindal* in a Letter, *Aug.* 27. 1556. writes, that all the Biſhops, who had been beyond Sea, had at their return dealt with the Queen to let the matter of the Habits fall; but ſhe continued inflexible. He laments the ill effects of the oppoſition that ſome had made to them, which had extreamly irritated the Queens Spirit. *Cox* Biſhop of *Ely* laments the averſion that they found in the Parliament to all the Propoſitions that were made for the Reformation of abuſes.

Peter Martyr to Biſhop *Hooper*; At firſt I conceived no ſmall joy of your ſingular and earneſt ſtudy, in that you put your endeavour that Chriſt his Religion may be brought again unto a chaſt and ſimple Purity. For what ſhould be more deſired of all Godly hearts, then that all things by little and little ſhould be clean taken away, and cut off, which have very little or nothing in them that can be referred wholly to Edification, but rather be judged of the Godly to be ſuperfluous.

Homily of Faſting, Part 1. p. 172, 173. Edit. 1673. Gods Church ought not, neither may it be ſo tyed to that, (*i. e.* Faſting) or any other Order now made, or hereafter to be made and deviſed by the Authority of Man, but that it may Lawfully for juſt cauſes, alter, change or mitigate thoſe Eccleſiaſtical Decrees and Orders; yea, recede wholly from them, and break them, when they tend either to Superſtition and Impiety, when they draw people from God, rather than work any edification in them. This Authority to mitigate Laws and Decrees Eccleſiaſtical the Apoſtles practiſed, ſignifying *Acts* 15. they would not lay any other burden upon them than theſe neceſſaries.

King

King *Charles* I. in his Declaration, with the Advice of his Privy Council, *Jan.* 1641. As for differences among our ſelves for matters indifferent in their own nature, we ſhall in tenderneſs to any number of our Loving Subjects very willingly comply with the Advice of our Parliament, that ſome Law may be made for the exemption of tender Conſciences from Puniſhment or Proſecution for ſuch Ceremonies (in ſuch caſes) which in the judgment of moſt men are held to be matters indifferent, and of ſome to be abſolutely unlawful.

Biſhop of Cork *and* Roſs's *Proteſtant Peacemaker.* Some Circumſtantials may be on our ſide abated, and had been doubtleſs long ago, if men of eager and inflexible Spirits had not hindered.

Dr. Goods *Firmianus & Dubit.* p. 153. Some Wiſe and Peaceable Men have deſired that the uſe of certain Ceremonies might be forborn at leaſt for a time, which notwithſtanding they are ſtill continued. Theſe Peaceable Men do abhor the great ſin of Separation, and do continue their Conformity.

Dr. *Stillingfleet* alſo in Preface to *Unreaſonableneſs of Separation.* Mr. *Claud* of *France*, Mr. *De L' Angle. &c.*

Ceremonies to be left free.

The Canons made 1640. Can. 7. In the Practice or Omiſſion of this Rite [bowing towards the Altar] we deſire that the Rule of Charity preſcribed by the Apoſtle may be obſerved, which is, that they which uſe this Rite, deſpiſe not them who uſe it not, and that they who uſe it not, condemn not thoſe that uſe it.

Biſhop Bilſon *of Subjection*, Part 4. p. 15 Strangers are ſuffered in their Churches to retain their own Ceremonies, as be neither againſt Faith and good Manners; and therefore may be born in Chriſtian Unity, without offence or confuſion.

Letter to Johannes a Laſco *concerning the uſe of ſuch Signs :* It is ſurely the part of Brotherly Charity commanded us by God, to leave the uſe of thoſe Signs free to the Judgment and Conſcience of the Congregation, except we ſee an open abuſe either of Superſtition, or of Contention, (as if they diſpleaſed the greater and better part of the Church). It was evident at St. *Pauls* time by the moſt clear Scriptures of God, that the uſe of days, meats, and all other external things, was made free, and it was a ſure token of infirmity of Faith to doubt thereof.

Lord

Lord Bacon *in his Conſiderat. Dedicat. to K.* James I. For the Cap and Surplice, ſince they be things in their nature indifferent, and yet by ſome held Superſtitious; and that the Queſtion is between Science and Conſcience, it ſeemeth to fall within the compaſs of the Apoſtles Rule, which is that the ſtronger deſcend and yield to the weaker, only the difference is, that it will be materially ſaid, that the Rule holds between a private man and a private man, and not between the Conſcience of a private man and the order of a Church. But yet ſith the Queſtion at this time is of a Toleration, not by connivance, which may encourage diſobedience, but by Law which may give a Liberty; it is good again to be adviſed, whether it fall not within the equity of the former Rule? And for ſubſcription it ſeemeth to be in the nature of a Confeſſion, and therefore proper to bind in the unity of Faith, and to be urged rather for Articles of Doctrine, than for Rites and Ceremonies, and points of outward concernment. For howſoever Politick Conſiderations and Reaſons of State may require Uniformity, yet Chriſtian and Divine grounds look chiefly upon Unity.

Dr. Edw. Bulkleys *Apol. for the Religion Eſtabliſhed*, Edit. 1608. p. 112. Touching the uſe of Surplices, Organs, *&c.* in Divine Service; I ſay that men may differ in Opinions of theſe things, and agree in unity of Faith and Knowledge of the Son of God.

Doctor Fuller *in his Appeal of injured Innocence, in defence of his Church Hiſtory*; Multiformity in things meerly indifferent with mutual Charity, doth more promote Gods Glory then Uniformity it ſelf.

Doctor Mores *Myſtery of Godlineſs*, Sect. 10 Pref. About the Communion; I confeſs an Uniformity would look better in outward ſhew, but is not worth the leaſt ſtir and violence in diverſities of actions, or rather circumſtances interpretable to ſo good a meaning, as either Kneeling or Sitting at the Communion is; and the real exerciſe of Charity in leaving every one free is every whit as ſuitable to this ſolemn performance, as the moſt exquiſite Uniformity, if devoid of the Spirit of Meekneſs, and mutual forbearance. *Item, To the ſame purpoſe about the Croſs:* Unity of Hearts being better than Uniformity in Actions indifferent, there ought to be no breach nor quarrel about theſe things: By an high value of the indiſpenſables of Chriſtianity, and of the tender regard to the Conſciences of men, the Miniſter will conciliate more authority to himſelf, than if he drew too hard to an uniform complyance in things where Chriſt hath left us free.

True

True ſtate of the Primitive Church, p. 20. Let us be men of underſtanding, men in Devotion, be zealous, and hold faſt the ſubſtantial parts of Religion, and let us leave it to Women and Children to contend about Ceremonies. Let it be indifferent to us, whether this or that, or no Ceremony, whether Kneel or not Kneel, Bow or not Bow, Surplice or no Surplice, Croſs or no Croſs, Ring or no Ring. Let us give Glory to God in all, and no offence to our Brethren in any thing.

Doctor Stillingfleets *Irenicum*, p. 65. He muſt be a great ſtranger in the Primitive Church, that takes not notice of the great diverſity of Rites and Cuſtoms uſed in particular Churches, without cenſuring of thoſe that differ'd from them; or if any by inconſiderate Zeal did proceed ſo far, how ill it was repreſented by other Chriſtians. And he concludes *with that Divine Aphoriſm of St.* Auſtin; *Indignum eſt ut propter ea quæ nos Deo neque digniores*, &c. It is an unworthy thing for Chriſtians to condemn and judge one another for thoſe things which do not commend us unto God. To the ſame purpoſe in *Unreaſonableneſs of Separation*, That the Croſs be left at liberty, as the Patents deſire it, or wholly taken away, *Pref.* p. 83. *Edit.* 3.

King Charles II. *Declaration at* Breda: Agreed to leave the Ceremonies at liberty.

Dr. Rudde *Biſhop of St.* Davids *Speech in the Convocation*, 1604. In the life time of the late Archbiſhop (then *Whitgift*) theſe things were not ſo extreamly urged, but that many Learned Preachers enjoyed their Liberty therein conditionally, that they did not by word nor deed diſgrace or diſturb the State eſtabliſhed.—

King Charles II. *Declaration from* Breda. None ſhall be denied the Lords Supper for not Kneeling; none compelled to uſe the Croſs; it ſhall be Lawful to him that deſires to uſe the Croſs, to have ſuch Miniſters as will uſe it; and if the proper Miniſter refuſe, to get another. None compell'd to bow at the name of Jeſus. The Surplice left to liberty, except in the Royal Chappel, Cathedrals, and Univerſities.

Another *Argument*. The miſchief to the Church hath been very great from theſe Ceremonies, eſpecially from the Croſs.

Firſt as to the Impoſition; though the preſent Fathers of the Church have ſignified their conſent unto a due liberty to Diſſenters, and ſome Indulgence to them beyond their Predeceſſors, yet ſeveral Miniſters in Queen *Elizabeths*, and King *James* I. Reign, and that of King *Charles* I. and at King *Charles* II. Return, have been turned out of

their Benefices, and silenced for Nonconformity to these Ceremonies, although the Church of *England* confesseth them to be but things indifferent. And it were hard, for refusing upon a Conscientious account to submit to things indifferent, to have one of the greatest punishments inflicted on a man, Suspension and Deprivation; even as Conformists would (many of them) think it hard to be silenced for not assenting to the Perseverance of the Saints, or any other of the five points, according to the common sense or notion of our Dissenting Brethren.

Secondly, These Ceremonies have been as it were a bone of Contention, thrown in between Conformists and Nonconformists. *Zanchies* Letter to Queen *Elizabeth* 1571. tells her; This Counsel about strict Imposition of Ceremonies will trouble the publick Peace of the Church, by causing contentions among men, and cause them to write Books one against another about things indifferent, which are the Golden Apples of Contention. Many an hot Dispute and Conference there hath been, and Books wrote for and against them with bitterness of Spirit; some contending as earnestly about these indifferent things, as about matters of Faith; as if the very Life and Soul of Religion lay in them, and as if the cause of Christ and our Protestant Reformation were to stand or fall with them. The Ceremony of the Cross hath been as vexatious to our Church, as ever the difference about the *Jewish* Ceremonies of Days and Meats was in the time of the Apostles, which occasioned a Council at *Jerusalem*, *Acts* 15. so many Chapters in St. *Pauls* Epistle, and such contention among them.

Thirdly, Much time hath been spent to little purpose or profit in Reading or Studying these matters. Oh the many that have wrote for and against! No little time doth it cost men in Writing, as Bishop *Mourton*, Dr. *Bourges* for; Dr. *Amos* against them and others; nay, every Book for or against Conformity, (as God knows there are abundance of them upon these fruitless Controversies) makes the Ceremonies *materiam contentionis* matter of the Controversie, and it calleth for a part and a considerable share in the Book. Time also spent in Reading and Studying the point; and there must be Prayer to be led by the Spirit to find out the Truth for satisfaction. The time also which is spent in Preaching on this point, for it is commanded in the Canons: I say this time would be much better spent in reading the Bible, with Comments or Treatises of Divinity, and so be Redeemed for Eternity, which now men are necessitated to spend for satisfaction herein.

All

All this, a great deal, or a considerable portion of time may be better improved, if this Ceremony be taken away. And then as my Lord *Bacons* Essays, p. 13. *Speaking of Peace in the Church*; It turneth the labours of Writing and Reading Controversies into Treatises of Mortification and Devotion.

Again, The strict exaction of these Ceremonies hath occasioned some to cry them up, as if a considerable part of Ministers Conformity to the Laws of God and Man lay therein, when in truth it is a very inconsiderable part. And some have sought to get into favour with greater Persons, and attain Preferment by a niceness and strict observance of every Punctilio about the Ceremonies, exacting perhaps a more strict Obedience to these than to the Laws of God. And he shall pass for an obedient and very good Son of the Church with some, that is a zealous stickler for these, though he be loose in his Life, formal in his Religion, and uncharitable to those that differ from him.

Again, Some have declared that they cannot joyn with us in Baptism, suffering their Children to be Baptized by Conforming Ministers, because of the Sign of the Cross which they in their Consciences cannot allow of; nor joyn in the Lords Supper because of Kneeling, which seems to them (though through great weakness, and a more unreasonable prejudice, when the Rubrick is so expressly against the Idolatry and Adoration of the Sacramental Bread) a symbolizing with Idolaters, which things have bred no small perplexity of mind and outward trouble to some Godly Persons, said Mr. *Sprint* in his days, *Cass. Anglic.*

I shall conclude this with *Dr.* Preston *on the Lords Prayer*, p. 89. *Thy Kingdom come*: We intreat the Lord that he would curse and cross all Antichristian Plots and Practices; and we are to Pray against all lets and stumbling blocks that would hinder the proceedings of the Gospel; that he would abandon all things that do offend, even all Remnants and Reliques of Superstition, and such Ceremonies as do but ensnare the Consciences of men, and draw a great many into Persecution and Trouble.

A Second Mischief to the Church hath been great in respect of Conformists blind submission to this Ceremony. One not long before I entred into the Ministry, and who lived in the same Parish where Providence placed me afterwards, when Dying lay under great troubles of his Conscience for his Conformity, being bred up a Nonconformist. I have read in Mr. *Spinter Cassander Anglicanus* of one or two more,

 not

not mentioned by name, as Conforming against their Consciences without sufficient satisfaction, have lamented it at last; as also of others, who have dyed very peaceably and comfortably, satisfied in their Conformity. Some Conformists have certainly run into a wrong defence of this Ceremony, as Dedicating the Child unto the Service of him who dyed upon the Cross, which is done in Baptism: And others have thought it above the peoples capacity. However, they may understand somewhat of what was said before, and that Signing with the Cross is none of their act and deed: Not they, but the Minister that is to wear the Surplice, and to Baptize, and Sign with the Cross. The Minister is concerned to look to that, the Lawfulness of these. And Mr. *Baxter* (as also *Mr.* Crofton's *Reformation no Separation*, p. 24. *Mr.* Nye's *Case of great use*, p. 10. *Mr.* Ball's *Tryal of the grounds of Separation*, p. 308. And the Author of a *Discourse of Scandal*,) in his *Christian Directory* among his Cases of Conscience hath resolved it, that Parents dissenting from it may suffer their children to be Signed with the Cross after Baptism, declaring to the Minister in private, or their Neighbours, that it was Baptism only that they desired, and that they disowned the Sign of the Cross, which they held to be unlawful. So that Parents are neither bound to the personal practice of it, nor to the profession of its Lawfulness.

And this appears to have been the Judgment and concurrent Practice of the Nonconformists of former times, who constantly joyned in the Prayers and other Acts of Worship, although they scrupled some Particular Ceremonies. All that we desire is to have the Liberty of our Consciences allowed us in that which is not theirs, but ours to practise. And if there be offence given, it is not from us, (said Dr. *Saunderson* in his *Treatise of Scandal*;) or at least not so much (in the present case of the Church) there being a necessity laid upon us as to the use of it, if our Consciences be satisfied therein: So that whatever we would do, if it were left to our Liberty to use or forbear it, since we are not allowed to exercise our Ministry otherwise than upon Conformity to it, it is Prudentially good, and Spiritually necessary for us to Conform to it, even in the Judgment of the Reformed Churches abroad, *Geneva*, as *Beza*, *Colladonus*, *Goulartius*, *Franciscus Port*, *Henricus Scephanus* declared in a Letter sent to the Brethren in *England*, that were unsatisfied in their Conformity to this Ceremony, and desired to know their Judgment. And so have the late Ministers in *France*, as Mr. *Daille*, Mr. *Claud*, Mr. *De L'Angle*

tells us in his Letter; My Opinion in this matter is the ſame that is held by our Churches. Mr. *Calvin* ſeemed to look upon it as tolerable, and to be born with, *Zancy* and others, though they did not fully approve of the Impoſition.

III. *Miſchief*, In reſpect of the cenſoriouſneſs of ſome Separatiſts, inveighing againſt theſe Ceremonies as Limbs of Antichriſt, reliques of Popery, Additions, Superſtitious, will Worſhip, *&c.* as before in the Objections againſt them, condemning (as my Lord *Hales* in his Diſcourſe of Religion calls them) theſe blameleſs Ceremonies as confidently, as if they were infallibly aſſured of their unlawfulneſs, reviling and cenſuring the Men that uſe them, as if he could not be a good Man that ſubmitteth to the Ceremonies, but muſt needs conform to them againſt his Conſcience out of Complyance with the Government, and for his Preferment ſake. It is hard for Miniſters who ſubmit to theſe things according to their Conſciences, though it be with great Charity and Moderation to thoſe that differ from them, to be termed Time-ſervers, Formaliſts, Luke-warm, Men wanting the Power of Godlineſs, as ſome conceited Perſons, who have more Heat than Light, more Zeal than Knowledge, do not ſtick to affirm. Sure this becometh not Chriſtian Charity, in 1 *Cor.* 13. 4. Charity vaunteth not it ſelf, is not puffed up (with a conceit of its own Judgment, as if it were infallible, and they muſt needs be in the right.) Again Charity thinketh no Evil, and doth not behave it ſelf unſeemly. But ſurely if we judge of their thinking by their evil ſpeaking, and unſeemly deportment towards their Governours, and others, there muſt be an abundance of cenſoriouſneſs in the Heart; *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh.* In 2 *Pet.* 2. 12. You there read of thoſe that ſpeak evil of things they underſtand not, applicable to theſe Men. Mr. *Baxter* ſaith thus in his Book of *Church-Government*; Of all our Ceremonies there is none that I have ſuſpected more to be ſimply unlawful than the Croſs, yet dare not I peremptorily ſay, that it is unlawful; nor will I condemn either Ancients or Moderns that uſe it; nor will I make any diſturbance in the Church about it, any farther than my own forbearance of it. And thoſe Grave Men at the Grand Debate; it being doubtful whether God hath given Men power to inſtitute ſuch Myſtical Teaching Signs, as being not neceſſary in general, fall not under the particular Rules, *&c.* They are by ſome held ſinful and unlawful in themſelves, [by ſome not as of another Judgment it ſeems] by others very inconvenient, and unſuitable to the ſimplicity of the Goſpel-Worſhip, *&c.* p. 9. *Of the Grand Debate.*

bate. But the new Generation of Diſſenters are grown wiſer than the Grave, Aged, and Judicious (that ſpeak more modeſtly, leaving the lawfulneſs of it as doubtful and *ſub Judice*) and ſeem to wonder at thoſe before them, that they ſhould ſee no farther, not to the utter unlawfulneſs of theſe Ceremonies, and ſome of the Prayers too, which they ſay, they ſee as clear as the Light to be Popiſh and Anti-chriſtian, and againſt Scripture. I profeſs that the Objections are ſo many, and the ill Circumſtances that attend its uſe at preſent, that after all I dare not be poſitive and peremptory that it is lawful; nor will I be over-confident, charitably allowing my Brethren their Liberty to diſſent, and deſiring the like Charity from them, as to my own Conformity upon prevailing probable Arguments; leaving it to God who only is Infallible, to decide the Caſe at the day of Judgment: Where I truſt his Mercy will pardon me if I have erred, as having ſought for the Spirit to guide me into Truth, and as having alſo the Ancient Church, and the Modern Reformed Forreign Divines approbation of Conformity thereunto.

It is from the ſtrict and ſevere Impoſition, the blind ſubmiſſion of others, not being able to give any tolerable account of it to their People, nor Anſwer Objections againſt it: And from the cenſoriouſneſs, and ill Names that have been given this Ceremony of the Croſs, that they have brought ſuch an Odium upon it, and wrought ſuch an ill Opinion in our Conforming People againſt it. Further they hate Popery, and Papiſts uſe this ſo much, and abuſe it to Idolatry and Superſtition, that they hate and diſguſt the uſe of it upon that account. I know our Governours never intended to make us Odious in the Eyes of the People, but I am ſure there could ſcarce be a more effectual way and means to do it, than by enjoyning theſe things ſo ſtrictly, the which People are ſo much ſet againſt, that they diſaffect thoſe that uſe them, and the Governours that impoſe them even againſt the guſt of the Congregation. If there had not been a little of the old grudge in ſome at the Grand Debate, ſure they had been yielded up then, and not have remained unto this day troubling the peace of the Church.

I ſhall conclude with the common Aſſertion of the Reformed Churches, That all Churches ſhould labour as much as poſſible may be, after Apoſtolical ſimplicity, and fewneſs of Ceremonies, which they judge the ſafeſt, the pureſt, and the beſt, as *Peter Martyr*, *Bucer*, *Calvin*, *Beza*, *Zanchy*, and indeed almoſt all good Men affirm.

FINIS.